

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT'S
COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

RAJ VIJAYASIRI, LTC, SRI LANKA ARMY

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1999

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DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4

19990909 376

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE 4 Jun 99		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis 7 Aug - 4 Jun 99
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE A Critical Analysis of the Sri Lankan Government's Counterinsurgency Campaign			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHORS) LTC Raj Vijayasiri Sri Lanka Army				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD 1 Reynolds Av., Bldg. 111, Rm. 123 Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/ MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words. The objective of this thesis is to analyze the Tamil insurgency that is going on in Sri Lanka for the last eighteen years. It lays out the historical, economic, political and military background to the problem in the initial two chapters. The discriminatory policies that were followed by successive governments against the Tamil people and the foundation of the government's counterinsurgency strategy are the main areas discussed in this part. The U.S and the British counterinsurgency doctrine were used as the guideline to evaluate the conduct of Sri Lankan government's counterinsurgency campaign. Few case studies were used to identify trends and lessons learnt. Failure to develop a proper national plan, lack of good intelligence and a clear political objective, inconsistency in carrying out plans, poor leadership, and ineffective psychological operations program were identified as the major shortcomings of the government's counterinsurgency campaign. The study suggests certain recommendations that could address the problems identified in the government's counterinsurgency campaign. Finally, the thesis concludes that the ongoing crisis will take a few more years of wise leadership and participation of all the parties involved to end this wasteful war.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Counterinsurgency, Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 120	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: LTC Raj Vijayasiri

Thesis Title: A Critical Analysis of the Sri Lankan Government's Counterinsurgency Campaign

Approved by:

Billy M. Blackwell, Thesis committee Chairman
LTC Billy M. Blackwell, M. S.

Graham H. Turbiville, Member
Graham H. Turbiville, Ph. D.

William W. Mendel, Member
Mr. William W. Mendel, M. A.

Accepted this 4th day of June 1999 by:

Philip J. Brookes, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SRI LANKAN COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN
by LTC Raj Vijayasiri, Sri Lanka Army, 120 pages.

The objective of this thesis is to analyze the Tamil insurgency occurring in Sri Lanka for the last eighteen years. The thesis lays out the historical, economic, political, and military background to the problem in the initial two chapters. The discriminatory policies that were followed by successive governments against the Tamil people and the foundation of the government's counterinsurgency strategy are the main areas discussed in this part.

The U.S. and British counterinsurgency doctrine were used as the guideline to evaluate the conduct of the Sri Lankan government's counterinsurgency campaign. A few case studies were used to identify trends and lessons learned. Failure to develop a proper national plan, lack of good intelligence and a clear political objective, inconsistency in carrying out plans, poor leadership, and ineffective psychological operations program were identified as the major shortcomings of the government's counterinsurgency campaign.

The study suggests certain recommendations that could address the problems identified in the government's counterinsurgency campaign. Finally, the thesis concludes that resolving the ongoing crisis in the next few years will require wise leadership, understanding, and participation of all the parties involved to end this wasteful war.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CGSOC itself was to me an intellectual challenge that taxed my mental endurance to the limits. I should thank my predecessor to CGSOC course from Sri Lanka Major Ruwan Wanigasuriya for prompting me to embark on this project.

I owe my gratitude to my thesis committee consisting of LTC Billy M. Blackwell, Dr. Graham H. Turbiville, and Mr. William W. Mendel. They were marvelous people who always prodded and guided me. In spite of having busy schedules themselves, they were generous enough to spare their time to go through my material and provide advice where needed.

No battle was won without good logistics. My wife, Preethi, should get a special mention here for her selfless service and perseverance. She kept me out of the day-to-day business of running the home front.

I was also privileged to meet a few special people in the course of researching for my thesis. All of them had extensive knowledge on counterinsurgency. A special thanks to Mr. Stuart D. Lyons, Mr. Roland Dutton, Mr. Donald Vought, and Mr. Thomas A. Marks for providing their insight into the intricacies of counterinsurgency.

The ever-pleasant Mrs. Helen Davis of the Graduate Degree Program office took her time to guide me on some of the formatting of my thesis. I should also mention the staff of the Combined Arms Research Library and my fellow students who helped me in some of my research proofreading and assisting in my thesis. I sincerely appreciate their efforts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. TAMIL INSURGENCY	12
3. ANALYSIS OF SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT'S COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN	29
4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM	61
5. CONCLUSION	86
APPENDIX	
A. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	92
B. LITERATURE REVIEW	94
C. ILLUSTRATIONS	98
D. TABLES	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	116
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	119

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Sri Lanka in Relation to India.....	99
2. Provinces of Sri Lanka.....	100
3. Sri Lanka: Distribution of Population.....	101
4. LTTE's Territorial Claims	102
5. LTTE's Main Centers for Procuring Supplies in India.....	103
6. LTTE Organization.....	104
7. LTTE International Net-work	105
8. LTTE Attack on Mualaitiuv Camp	106
9. Pasilan 2000	107
10. Attack on LTTE Base South of Vettalaikerni	108
11. LTTE Attack on Killicochochi Base.....	109

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Percentage Distribution of Population-1981	111
2. The Christian Composition of Population	112
3. Ethnic Composition of Religious Groups	112
4. Religious Composition of Ethnic Groups	113
5. Vital Statistics: Sri Lanka Compared with Selected Countries in Asia	114
6. Expenditure on Defense 1981-1986.....	115
7. Expenditure on Defense 1987-1994.....	115

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCION

Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon before becoming a Republic in 1978, is an island nation blessed with a beautiful tropical landscape and sunshine throughout the year. The island was known to ancient travelers as Serendib (meaning paradise in Arabic). The country's beauty and the advanced civilization that existed there was a marvel to them. Sri Lanka is located in the Indian Ocean, sitting across major sea routes that connected the East with the West. Due to this strategic location, Sri Lanka attracted many travelers, merchants, and conquerors. The close proximity to India (just thirty-two kilometers of sea separated Sri Lanka from the Southern tip of India, had a big impact on the island culturally, socially, and politically for thousands of years. (See appendix C, fig. 1.) The details of those influences will be discussed in Chapter 2. Sri Lanka has a landmass of 25,332 square miles (65,610 square kilometers) which supports a population of 18.7 million according to 1997 estimates.¹ Sri Lanka was divided into nine provinces during the period of the British rule for the purpose of easy administration. These provincial boundaries are still valid today. (See appendix C, fig. 2.)

The island has one of the most complex plural societies in any part of the world: two, if not three, distinct ethnic groups and as many as four of the world's major religions. The Sinhalese constitute the majority of the population (74 percent). Their ethnic distinctiveness is identified through their religion, "Theravada Buddhism," and their language--Sinhala language has its roots in classical Indian languages. However,

now it is a distinctly Sri Lankan language and is not spoken anywhere else.² The Sinhalese population is concentrated in the Southern, Western, and Central parts of the island. They originally came to the island over 2,500 years ago, from India (Northern India-Gujarat or Bengal, as most authorities on the island's history believe, and in later times from Southern India as well). The Sinhalese have been influenced by Portuguese, English, and (to a lesser extent) Dutch, and recently the Burmese and Thai. There have always been strong cultural and religious ties between the Sinhalese and the Burmese and Thais, through their common religion--Buddhism.³

The largest ethnic minority on the island, the Tamils constitute 18 percent of the population. There are two distinct Tamil groups. The Sri Lanka or Jaffna Tamils are mainly descended from people who arrived at the island well over 1,500 years ago. The second group, the Indian Tamils, are mainly descended from plantation workers. The British planters and their agents in India brought them to the island in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.⁴ The Sri Lankan Tamil population (12 percent of the total population of Sri Lanka) is concentrated in the drier Northern and Eastern parts of the island. Two significant points about the geographical distribution of the Tamil population should be kept in mind. First, over one-third of the Tamils live and work in the predominantly Sinhalese parts of the country. (See appendix C, fig. 3 and appendix D, table 1.) Secondly, even more significant in the context of the separatist agitation among sections of the Sri Lankan Tamils at present is the proximity of the Jaffna population and the Northern Province of Sri Lanka to the state of Tamil Nadu in Southern

India. Tamil Nadu itself is an important center of separatist sentiment in India and has played a very significant and disruptive role in the affairs of Sri Lanka.

The Indian Tamils, who constitute 6 percent of the total population, live mainly in Central and Uva Provinces, with smaller groups in Sabaragamuwa. Partly because of the geographical separation, the two Tamil groups do not have much in common, except their language and religion. Both groups are Hindus, but the rigors of the Hindu caste system have generally kept them apart. The bulk of the plantation workers being regarded as low caste by the Sri Lankan or Jaffna Tamil elite. The next biggest minority group comprises the Muslims and they, too, have been affected substantially by the ongoing civil war.

The Muslims constitute about 7 percent of the population and are scattered throughout the island, with the exception of Eastern Province where 30 percent of the Muslim population is concentrated. These Muslims are the descendants of merchants who came to the island around the thirteenth century for trade. The Muslims regard themselves as a distinct ethnic group although most of them are Tamil speaking.⁵

Sri Lanka is a multi-religious country where one has freedom to follow different faiths. (See appendix B, tables 2,3, and 4.) The Sinhalese mainly practice Buddhism and Buddhists represent 69 percent of the total population. Buddhism is believed to have been brought to Sri Lanka in the third century B.C. The Buddhist religion was embraced by the Sinhalese kings and given state patronage. It had a great impact on the evolution of the cultural and social value systems of the Sinhalese. Hinduism (15 percent of the population) is the main religion of the Tamil people. The Tamil people also inherited a rich culture and tradition molded for thousands of years by the Hindu religion. With

colonial rule, a third, religion was introduced to the local population. That was Christianity.

The Portuguese first introduced Christianity to the island in the sixteenth century. They used harsh measures to convert the island's people to Roman Catholic. Buddhist and Hindu places of worship were burnt. Similarly, the Dutch exerted a less violent but no less effective legal and social pressure, to become members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Finally, the British introduced Protestant religion to the county and made the Christians a privileged minority. They enjoyed the more prestigious sectors of the school systems and dominated public life. Today, Christians represent 8 percent of the population

Sinhala and Tamil are the two national languages. English is the second language and is commonly used in government and spoken by about 10 percent of the population.⁶ Sri Lanka enjoys a high literacy rate of 90 percent.

Traditionally, Sri Lanka had taken pride in its welfare system developed since the 1930s. The country had quite different priorities from most of her South and South Asian neighbors. Between 30 to 40 percent of the budget is spent on welfare services: education, health, food subsidies, and settlement of peasants on irrigated land. Sri Lanka's welfare programs have been maintained despite the enormous increase in military expenditure in the last decade. The statistics indicate the quality of life in Sri Lanka. (See appendix D, table 5.)⁷ However, the free market economic policies adopted since the early 1980s have cut a certain amount of welfare measures and subsidies.

Sri Lanka has a democratic form of government with an executive President as the head of State. The Legislative Branch is comprised of a unicameral Parliament. (two hundred and twenty five seats, members elected by popular vote based on a modified proportional representation system to serve a six-year term)⁸ The People's Alliance Party (PA), led by President Kumaranatunga, is the party in power currently. The main opposition party is the United National Party (UNP). There are a few other parties such as Ceylon Workers Congress (CLDC, representing the Indian Tamils), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC, representing the Muslims), and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF, representing the Tamils) which are courting ethnic loyalties of the minority communities.

The Sri Lankan economy is mainly based on agriculture, services, manufacturing, and tourism. Before the 1980s, the government virtually ran the economy. In the early 1980s, the economy was liberalized and free market economic policies were adopted. Slow economic reform, the ongoing insurgency, recurrent droughts, unemployment, and government overspending has badly affected the economy. Sri Lanka has a large foreign debt.⁹

Because of insurgency, the country's tourist industry, which was a major income source, was badly affected in the 1980s. Foreign investments, too, were affected in the same way. The rising defense expenditure is a big challenge to the economy. (See appendix D, table 6 and 7.)

Sri Lanka's military consists of the army, navy, and air force. In the early 1980s Sri Lanka's defense establishment was one befitting the island's small size: a 14,000-man

army. (12,000 regulars and 2,000 reservists; a 3,500-man air force flying a collection of small fixed wing air craft and helicopters; a navy of 3,500 men scattered about thirty small patrolcraft; and a police force of roughly 10,000 assigned to small stations throughout the country)¹⁰ Before the beginning of the Tamil insurgency, the military was mainly used as a ceremonial outfit. The only combat they faced was a rural youth rebellion by the disenchanted Sinhalese youth in 1971.

With the increase of Tamil insurgency, the military was beefed up with both manpower and equipment. Today the army has a strength of nearly 120,000 with seventy-five infantry battalions organized into five divisions. A brigade each of armor, artillery, engineers, and special forces backs up the infantry. The armor brigade has five regiments equipped with Russian-built T-55 tanks, BMP armored personnel carriers, and a regiment of old Saladin armored cars. The artillery brigade is equipped with a varied assortment of guns and mortars ranging from 130-mm guns, 127-mm howitzers, and 120-mm mortars. The special forces brigade consists of two commando regiments, three airmobile battalions, and three special forces regiments.

The navy has a strength of 12,000, and is equipped with Chinese and Israeli made gun boats, fast patrol craft, air cushion vehicles (hovercraft), and landing craft. The air force is the smallest of the three services with a strength of 10,000. They are equipped with Russian-built HIND MI 24 gun-ships, HIP MI 17 troop carriers, Israeli built Kafir jets, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), Bell helicopters, and transport airplanes. Sri Lanka's police force also has grown into a large organization with a strength of nearly

80,000. The police also have a paramilitary force known as Special Task Force (STF), which are well trained to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

Sri Lanka was a country, which had a great potential for growth when it gained independence from the British in 1948. It had a large foreign reserve, a well-developed administration, basic infrastructure, and an educated bureaucracy. When the former Prime Minister of Singapore visited Sri Lanka in early 1960s, he said that he wanted to develop his country to the standards of Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, the political leadership of Sri Lanka could not provide the pragmatic leadership that was required to govern a multiethnic and multireligious country like Sri Lanka.

Before the civil war, the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil and Muslim communities interacted positively, except for a few communal clashes. However, the civil war has torn the three communities apart, and it will take many years to mend. The young Tamil generation especially has been entirely alienated from the Sinhalese culture and society. Because of the civil war the crime rate has also gone up substantially in the country due to the proliferation of handguns. A few decades ago Sri Lanka's crime rate was one of the lowest in the region. Murder was a rare crime in the early sixties. The market economy has also contributed to the transformation of the values in the society. Everything has a price today and hired killings and mass murders have become too frequent. The civil war has not left anyone unscathed in Sri Lanka, from the poor peasant to an assassinated President and hundreds of thousands have been made refugees. Thousands have been killed and maimed and I was no exception in this regard.

I started my career as a second lieutenant in the Sri Lanka Armored Corps in 1982, after completing eighteen months of training at the Sri Lanka Military Academy. I went on my first operational assignment to Jaffna in November 1982 in charge of a troop of Saladin armored cars. For four years, I took part in numerous counterinsurgency operations as a troop leader. In October 1986, I opted to join the special forces, which was then known as the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). It was a small unit of three officers and forty-five soldiers who were highly trained and dedicated. I was given the command of a team, which had twenty men. It was an exciting period, with many jungle patrols, ambushes, and raids. The RDF produced operational results far outweighing its small strength. Before long, it was expanded to meet the growing demand of operational commitments. I have remained with the organization for the last twelve years holding various appointments from company command to battalion command.

During this period, I have seen many of my officers and soldiers killed and wounded. I too had my share of pain when I was struck by a gunshot in a major operation, conducted along the Eastern coast. Since I got involved in the counterinsurgency campaign, I had a desire to study the mechanics, the underlying reasons behind all this chaos. However, I barely had a breathing space during the last fifteen years of combat until I started my “best year of life” at the United States Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC) at Leavenworth. At CGSC, I have had the opportunity to embark on that long awaited journey of self-discovery. The best vehicle for that journey was the Graduate Degree Program offered by the College, and I enrolled in that to do a research on my country’s civil war.

The primary question of my thesis is, "How effective was the Sri Lankan government's counterinsurgency campaign?" The secondary question is, "What can be done to rectifying defects in the strategy and tactics adopted?" Since I found the subject vast, I have tried to narrow my focus mainly on the government and military's counterinsurgency aspects. I have used other aspects, such as social, economic, cultural, and political, to help explain my primary area of study.

The first two chapters of the thesis discuss the historical, social, economic, and cultural background of the problem. These details take the reader to the environment, which created the crisis. I had to be extremely careful not be biased doing this portion of the research as most of us who were intimately involved in the conflict carry our own prejudices. My task was made further difficult by the fact that most of the literature written on the conflict, except for a few publications, was biased towards one side or the other.

Chapter 3 analyzes the government's and military's counterinsurgency strategy and tactical operations in order to pick out things that were or were not effective. I used the British and U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine to compare and contrast the Sri Lankan campaign. Several case studies from different parts of the world, such as the Malayan campaign, the campaign against Mau Mau rebels of Kenya conducted by the British, and the campaign against the Philippine communist guerrillas conducted by the U.S., were used in the study to compare with the Sri Lankan experience.

The fourth chapter lays out what can be done to rectify the shortcomings and further improve the concepts and methods used. The concepts and methods suggested in

this thesis are by no means intended to be prophetic, but they should provide food for thought for the planners at political and military levels. It is up to the government and the military to appoint a learned and experienced planning cell to work out the political and military strategy required to achieve the desired end state. In the concluding chapter, I will address a few options available to all parties involved in the conflict for future actions.

Why should one make an effort to study a civil war that is taking place in a small country in the Third World? The reasons are numerous. First, this civil war has pitted the most efficient, ruthless, and fanatical insurgent group in the world today, against a Third World army, with eighteen years of experience in counterinsurgency. The combat varies from conventional battles to the classic guerrilla hit and run tactics. The methods include terrorist actions that make the famous Irish Republican guerrillas' actions look lame. Some battles rage to such an extent that a well defended brigade of 1,200 soldiers supported by artillery and air support can perish in just three days. The terrain varies from hot and humid canopy jungles to the Lebanon like built-up areas in Jaffna.

The combat also tests all three services to their maximum capabilities. The use of technology too is significant. It ranges from the use of Internet and satellite communications to the use of surface-to-air missiles. The Tamil insurgents have the most-perfected suicide technology in the world. They use explosive filled high-speed boats to blast navy gunboats. Human bombs are used to neutralize political and military leaders. The LTTE also uses vehicle bombs that devastate economic targets and population centers with gruesome results.

The conflict has far-reaching implications in the region, as well as international implications. As with the current trend of insurgents, terrorists, drug lords, and mafia organizations cooperating with each other, it is inevitable that some of the technologies and concepts developed by the Sri Lankan insurgents will be imported to outside organizations. The motives for such cooperation may be monetary, ideological or political.¹¹

¹*The Far East and Australia 1998* (London: Europa Publication Limited, 1998), 1032.

²K. M. de Silva, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Conflict, Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1996), 1.

³*Ibid.*, 4.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵de Silva, 5

⁶*The Far East and Australia 1998*, 1034.

⁷de Silva, 48.

⁸*The Far East and Australia 1998*, 1033.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Thomas A. Marks, "Disintegration of Revolution in Sri Lanka," in *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 194, 195.

¹¹Rohan Gunaratna, *Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1997), 154.

CHAPTER 2

TAMIL INSURGENCY

Sri Lanka has a long recorded history, which dates back 2,500 years. According to chronicles, the ancestors of the majority Sinhalese ethnic group came from Northern India and introduced several new cultural, social, and technological systems to the country. A highly developed hydro-irrigation system was one innovation. It was based upon a series of tanks that could hold vast amounts of rainwater. Beginning in the sixth century a series of invasions were launched by the Southern Indian dynasties of Chola, Pandava, and Chera into Sri Lanka. Therefore, the Sinhalese kingdom, which was flourishing at Anuradhapura, was pushed to Polonnaruwa.¹ The Sinhalese fought back and managed to repel these attacks most of the time. The Southern Indian kings established a kingdom in the Northern part of Sri Lanka in Jaffna. The invading forces destroyed the temples and palaces and plundered the cities. This created the deep-rooted animosity that still haunts both ethnic groups. History also tells stories of positive interaction between the two cultures. The Sinhalese kings at times married princesses from Southern India. Southern Indian soldiers served under Sinhalese kings.² There were whole Tamil villages in the Eastern province that followed Buddhism, which was the religion of the Sinhalese.³ People of both races helped each other in their needs, especially in areas where the two races cohabited.

The first colonial rulers to establish their hold in Sri Lanka were the Portuguese who came in 1505 and took control over the coastal areas and the trade by 1597. They

also captured the Jaffna kingdom by 1627. The Portuguese rule was harsh and left a deep scar in both the Sinhalese and the Tamil psyche. They mainly exploited the country's riches and used force or other measures to convert locals to the Catholic faith. The Dutch took control over the trade in Sri Lanka in 1658, by expelling the Portuguese. The Dutch were mainly interested in trade and did not try to impose their beliefs or culture on the locals. The Roman Dutch law and the plantation economy are two of their legacies. The Burgher population of 100,000 descendants of Dutch and Sinhalese parents is another reminder of their presence. Finally, in 1796 the British defeated the Dutch and waged a campaign that resulted in gaining the control of the whole island in 1805.⁴

The British intention was to exploit the country's resources. They did this by creating a wedge between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils. Under the British rule, the Tamils had access to better education through the missionary schools established especially in the North. During the colonial period, a large number of Tamils got influential government jobs disproportionate to their ethnic ratio. Tamils dominated prestigious jobs in the fields of medicine, law, and government. They controlled a major portion of the country's business too. The animosities between the two races were kept in check by the colonial rule. Finally, Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 from Britain. The political leaders of the two communities were united in their fight against their colonial ruler and in their agitation to gain independence. With Sri Lanka's independence, each faction jockeyed to get more privileges for their respective communities. The Tamil leaders demanded 50 percent power in the parliament. The Sinhalese political leaders were keen to decrease the influence the Tamil community had during the colonial rule

and wanted to reverse the fortunes of the Sinhalese community. They overlooked the needs of the minority Tamils to appease the majority. They lacked the political maturity to integrate the minority into the main stream. The political leaders of both communities lost an excellent opportunity to build the foundation for long-term ethnic harmony. This costly mistake led to untold miseries for both communities in the coming decades. Several parliamentary acts were passed by Sinhalese political leaders, which alienated the Tamils. One such decree mandated all government servants to have a Sinhala language proficiency in order to be promoted. Many Tamil government servants were discriminated against due to this policy. Another was the proportional representation that was administered in the university admissions. Students were admitted to the universities according to ethnic ratios rather than merit.⁵ This barred many Tamil youths that got high marks from entering universities, and many of them were attracted to the militant groups that were being organized during this time.

Every time the subject of devolution of powers to Tamil areas was taken up, chauvinistic elements in the Sinhalese majority blocked it. Several communal clashes took place from 1956 to 1983, during which Tamil houses and businesses were burned and looted, and Tamil people killed. Tamils also retaliated by attacking the Sinhalese communities who were living in Tamil areas. By the early 1970s, Tamil youth started to lose faith in their political leaders and started building up small insurgent groups. Their aim was to achieve a separate state for the Tamils through an armed struggle. (See appendix C, fig. 4.) The atrocities that were heaped upon the Tamils by politically instigated Sinhalese thugs in the infamous communal violence in July 1983, effected the

turning point in the ethnic strife. On that occasion, nearly four hundred Tamils were killed and their houses and business looted and burned. Most of the Tamils who were living amongst the Sinhalese fled to predominantly Tamil areas in the North and East. Nearly 100,000 took refuge in Tamil Nadu in India. Another substantial group came to Western Europe and to the United States as political refugees.⁶ Youths joined the militant groups by the hundreds. The Tamil Diaspora gave the maximum international publicity to the way the Sri Lankan government handled the 1983 communal violence. It created a black mark against Sri Lanka that would produce immense difficulties for the Sri Lankan government diplomatically, economically, and in getting weapons to fight the Tamil insurgency.

Tamil Nadu with its 55 million Tamil population was naturally sympathetic with their brethren across the Palk Strait. It pressured the Indian Central Government to take a more active role in solving the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils. The Indian government viewed the Sri Lankan government's foreign policy at this time as drifting from its traditional, non-aligned status to a more pro Western posture. The Sri Lankan government also sought assistance from countries, such as Pakistan and China, which were archenemies of India, to combat the Tamil insurgency. There were also Israeli experts in the country who were training Sri Lankan troops in urban combat. The Sri Lankan government also gave permission to erect a Voice of America (VOA) station in the country and gave the tender to develop the Trincomalee harbor to an U.S. firm. New Delhi considered these actions as threatening its national security.⁷ The ethnic conflict gave the Indian government an excellent opportunity to put pressure on its Southern

neighbor. Indira Ghandi, the Prime Minister at that time, gave the go ahead to arm and train the Tamil militants to subvert the Sri Lankan Government. The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), which is the equivalent of the Russian KGB in India, was given the responsibility to organize this project. Several training camps were established in India in Tamil Nadu, Bangalore, Uttar Pradesh, and Vishakapatnam, where retired and serving Indian military personnel instructed militants on various military tactics to take on the Sri Lankan military. The Indian government also supplied the Tamil insurgents with weapons, ammunition, radio equipment, explosives, and other war like items. (See appendix C, fig. 5.)

The large number of Tamil refugees who sought asylum in Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia started contributing in various ways to the Tamil insurgency. They contributed money and influenced political leaders in those countries to be sympathetic to the Tamil cause. They also started to pressure the donor countries that were providing the Sri Lankan government with foreign aid. The human right violations committed by the government troops were publicized all over the world. Many offices were opened in the leading capitals of the world to coordinate fund-raising, propaganda, and military procurement activities.

With the overt support of the Indian government, several Tamil insurgent groups came into prominence by 1984. Of them, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE), Tamil Ealam Liberation Organization (TELO), Ealam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), and Ealam People's Revolutionary Front (EPRLF) were the major groups. Out of all the groups the LTTE demonstrated strict discipline amongst its cadre

and had better success in confrontations with the government forces. Velupillai Prabhakaran, a native of Velvettiturai, a coastal town in Jaffna that was famous for its smugglers, led the LTTE. He demonstrated most of the qualities of a successful guerrilla leader, such as ruthlessness, cunning, and a keen sense of priorities. He did not waste much time in decimating rival Tamil groups and making LTTE the strongest Tamil insurgent group. Now the Sri Lankan security forces had a bigger problem.

As the LTTE beefed-up its cadre and capabilities, its tactics, too, changed from earlier hit-and-run encounters with security forces to overrunning isolated company-size detachments. This forced Government forces to close down most of their isolated small detachments. Therefore, forces lost control over the Jaffna peninsula by the end of 1985. In June 1987, the security forces launched a large offensive operation with the aim of regaining control over the peninsula. The initial phase of the campaign named the Vadamarachchi operation was a complete success in spite of heavy casualties. It became clear to the Indian Government that the Tamil insurgents they trained and armed were going to lose the ultimate battle. Therefore, they decided to intervene directly. The Indian's first action was to send a flotilla to Jaffna with a load of food which was turned back by the Sri Lankan navy. Later, they violated the Sri Lankan air space by using a fleet of cargo planes and escort fighters to drop food bundles to Jaffna. This was viewed as an indirect threat to the Sri Lankan Government to stop its operations in the Jaffna peninsula.

India brokered a hasty cease-fire and both parties under the auspices of India signed a peace package. Several clauses were included in the Peace Accord that were

meant to safeguard the security interests of India. Sri Lanka, it was said “agreed to meet some of India’s concerns” which are itemized as follows.⁸

1. An early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence with a view to ensuring that such presence will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lanka relations.
2. Trincomalee or any water port in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India’s interests.
3. The work of restoring and operating the Trincomalee oil tank farm will be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka.
4. Sri Lanka’s agreements with foreign broadcasting organizations will be reviewed to ensure that any facilities set up by them in Sri Lanka are used solely as public broadcasting facilities and not for any military or intelligence purposes.

India sent 100,000 Indian forces to Sri Lanka to monitor the cease-fire. Their tasks also included disarming the insurgents and implementing the Indo-Lanka agreement. The Indian force was known as Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF). The Indian Government’s intention was to neutralize the LTTE and install a Tamil militant group that was more likely to follow their dictates. India did not want a separate Tamil state at its doorstep. This would have prompted the Tamil Nadu with 50 million Tamils to demand the same from the Indian Central government. The Indian government started training and arming the Tamil National Army (TNA) which was supposed to protect the Tamil areas once the Indian Forces left the island. The LTTE understood the Indian plan and they immediately started to attack the IPKF. In spite of heavy casualties suffered, the

IPKF finally managed to contain the LTTE to the Mulaitivu jungles.⁹ The LTTE was running short of essential combat supplies. In the mean time, the leadership of the Sri Lankan government changed and R. Premadasa became the President. President Premadasa wanted the IPKF to withdraw. He went to the extent of supplying the LTTE with weapons and other warlike supplies to fight the IPKF. India finally withdrew its forces in 1987 after suffering 1,555 killed, and 2,987 wounded in its unsuccessful counterinsurgency campaign in Sri Lanka.¹⁰

The understanding between the Premadasa government and the LTTE did not last very long. In June 1990, LTTE broke the cease-fire unilaterally and launched surprise attacks on army camps and police stations in the North and South. Nearly six hundred police men who surrendered to the LTTE were executed. The government forces launched a counter offensive and managed to regain some of the areas that were under LTTE control. While government forces focused their counter guerrilla operations on the East, the LTTE developed a very effective infrastructure in the North. They collected taxes from the people. (See appendix C, fig. 6.) They had their own police force to enforce law and order. In fact, they were running a de facto administration while a government agent and few other government employees who were working under the LTTE control, represented the government. At the same time, the LTTE started a campaign to target the political leadership of the Sinhalese majority as well as the moderate Tamil political leadership.

Assassination of political and military leaders became a common strategy of LTTE. First, they killed the Sri Lankan Defense Minister Ranjan Wijeratna by exploding

a car bomb as he was coming out of his residence. The former Minister for Irrigation and Power and Presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayaka, who took a leading role in engineering the peace package, was their next target. Mr. Dissanayaka was killed along with fifty-eight bystanders by a suicide bomber while he was addressing a public rally in 1994 in Colombo. The naval commander Admiral Clancy Fernando, also became victim of a suicide bomber, which rammed his motorcycle into the commander's car.¹¹ The former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the main architect of the Indo-Lanka agreement and the man who supported the LTTE in their fight against Sri Lankan government had to pay the ultimate price too. Prabhakaran knew that if Rajiv Gandhi came into power, Gandhi would use all the power he had to crush the LTTE. Therefore, the LTTE decided to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi and again used a suicide bomber with devastating results. Gandhi was killed when he was about to address a public rally in Tamil Nadu in Southern India in May 1991.

The President of Sri Lanka, R. Premadasa, who was also in the LTTE hit list suffered the same fate. The LTTE managed to infiltrate the President's inner circle. The suicide bomber remained dormant for two years until the fateful day he accomplished his mission by blowing up the President during a May Day rally in Colombo in 1993. Nearly thirty-five civilians were also killed in the same incident. The LTTE strategy during this period was to weaken the government's ability to wage an effective counter-guerrilla campaign by eliminating its leadership, weakening the economy, and lowering the morale of the public. They exploded several bombs including massive lorry bombs in the capital

Colombo killing hundreds of people and creating millions of dollars of damage to property.

After the assassination of President Premadasa, D. B. Wijetunga took over as President. The situation did not change much during his tenure. In the general election of 1994, the UNP party, which was in power for seventeen years, was defeated and the People's Alliance (PA) party, led by Chandrika Kumaranatunga, came into power. Both parents of President Kumaranatunga were former Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka. Her father was assassinated by Sinhalese extremist elements in 1956. Her husband was the leader of a popular party and he too was gunned down by Sinhalese extremist elements in 1978. Solving the ethnic crisis was on the top of her agenda. The PA government immediately announced a cease-fire and started negotiations with the LTTE. The talks went on for a few months and the LTTE broke the cease-fire in April 1994 by conducting a surprise attack on the naval harbor in Trincomalee where they sank two navy gunboats using underwater demolition teams. The PA government shifted the focus of its military campaign from the East to the North to capture the Jaffna peninsula, the hub of the LTTE de facto administration. Jaffna has a great symbolic value to the Tamils since it has been the center of Tamil culture for centuries. It also generates a large income through money sent by Tamil expatriates living in Western countries and the Middle East. Agriculture also brings in income to Jaffna.

The military's push to capture Jaffna started in October 1995 and after three months of severe battles, the military managed to capture the Jaffna peninsula from the LTTE. During this period, the LTTE forced the 500,000-strong Jaffna population to

vacate the area. When the military captured Jaffna, it was a ghost town with only a few hundred people remaining. Once the army stabilized the area, the people started coming back from the areas in Wanni and Mulaitivu where they were living as refugees.

The LTTE withdrew its entire infrastructure that was in Jaffna to Mulaitivu and Wanni. However, they lost a vast income base in Jaffna and the credibility they had with the Tamil people and with the Tamil Diaspora living abroad. The LTTE in addition continued to recruit and train its cadre. It also increased its operations in the East and other parts of the country in order to divert government troops from the operations conducted in the North. The army had tied down about 80 percent of their combat forces controlling the newly captured Jaffna and Killinochchi areas. On July 1996, the LTTE launched a massive attack on an isolated military garrison in the Eastern coastal area Mulaitivu. The Army lost nearly 1,400 men and all the equipment and materials in this attack. This was the biggest loss to the military so far in the history of the conflict. This incident will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The government's next military objective was to capture the main supply route linking Jaffna with the rest of the country. It was critical for the government to take control of this route because all the needs of nearly 400,000 Jaffna population who had returned to the peninsula plus the logistics for the military were transported either by sea or by air. Both options were costly and vulnerable to LTTE attacks. The operation to capture the land route was named "Victory Assured" and was launched in June 1997. The LTTE aggressively resisted the military offensive and the progress of the operation was very slow. After one year of fighting and with nearly two thousand killed and several

thousands more injured the military still has nearly forty kilometers to link up with Elephant Pass.

Two major incidents took place on the battlefield in the late 1998. First, the military, which failed to overrun the LTTE defenses in Mankulam for nearly one year, launched another push and managed to capture Mankulam in October 1998.¹² Simultaneously, the LTTE launched a large attack on the military defense complexes in Killinochchi and Paranthan, which were brigade bases and managed to overrun both locations after two days of fierce fighting.¹³ Though the military casualty figures are not known due to the censorship imposed by the government, the figure of government troops killed was close to nine hundred according to unofficial estimates. The LTTE handed over nearly six hundred and fifty bodies of government troops killed in action to the army through the ICRC (International Committee of Red Cross). The military losses in these two locations are said to be the biggest so far for the government forces in the history of its counter-guerrilla campaign. The LTTE also lost nearly seven hundred to eight hundred cadre and nearly one thousand were injured in this attack. The LTTE attack in Killinochchi would be further discussed in Chapter 3.

From the very beginning of their existence in early 1980s, the LTTE understood the importance of external support to sustain their campaign. They gradually built up an international network that heavily depended on the Tamil Diaspora dispersed throughout the world. The LTTE opened offices in many major cities in the Western world such as in Britain, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, South Africa, the United States, and Holland. They contacted political leaders in those countries to drum up support for their cause and

to block economic aid that was being provided to the Sri Lankan government. The human rights violations committed by the military, especially in the early stages of the anti-guerrilla campaign, were publicized in the international media. The LTTE also developed a highly effective fundraising program amongst the Tamil expatriates and Tamil political refugees. The LTTE had to increase their reliance on the international network due to the loss of Indian government support they were getting before they killed Rajiv Gandhi. (See appendix C, fig. 7.) The LTTE raises US \$2 million a month through their offices and cells in thirty-eight countries. Central to fundraising is LTTE propaganda targeting 450,000 Sri Lankan Tamils living in about 50 countries.¹⁴ The LTTE used several ships to engage in legitimate trade, such as transporting timber and grains and when the need arose the same ships were used to smuggle war materials to their coastal bases in Sri Lanka. A ship named *Ahat* was tracked by the Indian navy and was destroyed in January 1993 in the Indian Ocean. It was carrying a large quantity of arms, ammunition, and explosives. Later in February 1996 the Sri Lankan air force, closer to Mulaitiuv beaches, destroyed another ship of the LTTE while it was unloading its cargo.

The LTTE also developed connections with corrupt Burmese military leaders, Afghan rebels, and former Soviet block countries in order to get their weapons, ammunition, communication equipment, and other special equipment. It is believed that the LTTE used drug smuggling as a means to raise finances but there is no conclusive evidence to prove this case.¹⁵

The retaking of Jaffna seems to be a priority aim with the LTTE leader, Prabhakaran. Logistics of government forces and the 400,000 Jaffna civilians are totally

dependent on the air and sea lines of communications. Since the government still cannot open the land route to Jaffna, the LTTE is putting tremendous pressure on the already burdened air force and the navy. The air force has already lost nearly seventeen aircraft and a large number of pilots in this war. They are short of both of these commodities to perform their current missions. The LTTE is also attacking the Sri Lankan naval convoys using their high speed and agile boats often incorporating Black Sea Tiger suicide boats. Prabhakaran is also doing his utmost to destabilize the government's civic action program and administration in Jaffna. The LTTE assassinated Mrs. Sarojini Yogeswaran (a Tamil civil servant), the Jaffna Mayor in 1997. Mr. Pon Sivapalan (again a Tamil civil servant), who replaced her, was also killed a few months later by a LTTE bomb while he was attending a meeting with several other officials inside the Jaffna council building.

Furthermore, the LTTE killed the town commandant Major General Larry Wijeratne in 1997. Major General Susantha Mendis who was appointed as the new town commandant was also killed on the same bomb incident at the same time the Jaffna Mayor was killed. The LTTE has begun a psychological operations campaign in Jaffna to discourage the civilians from giving information to the military on their activities. They have threatened other government employees not to cooperate with the government. It is a full-fledged effort to cripple the government control in Jaffna before an offensive to retake it.

The insurgents have also activated a big recruitment effort to bolster its strength after the casualties it suffered in the Mankulam and Killinochchi battles. Almost 90 percent of LTTE recruits are children of twelve to fifteen years of age. Tamil families

have been told to give one child to the organization or to pay a huge sum of money. The children are enticed to join the organization through cleverly conducted motivational lectures and film shows of past LTTE victories over the security forces. After they join the organization, their contacts with the outside world become nonexistent. In most of the attacks these "baby brigades" are the first waves to lead the attacks against heavily mined security force defenses.

The next phase of the war is going to be critical for both the government and the LTTE. If the LTTE becomes successful in getting Jaffna, the government's counterinsurgency effort is going to slip back by many years. The LTTE is going to get increased support from the Tamil people in Sri Lanka and abroad, who are now somewhat apprehensive about the Ealam dream. At the same time, if the LTTE fails to gain a foothold in Jaffna within the next few years, the government forces may have a chance of capturing the main supply route (MSR) connecting Jaffna to Colombo.

Summary

The root cause for the Tamil insurgency to develop was the state sponsored discrimination that was practiced by the majority Sinhalese political leaders. The main ingredients that were needed for an insurgency to develop were adequately available. The LTTE got popular support from the Tamil people due to their dedication to the cause. They initially got outside support from India and later depended on their international network. Their aim to get a separate state for the Tamils was a strong cause and it kept the cadre continually motivated even under harsh conditions. Prabhakaran, the leader of LTTE, is the main driving force with his unbending determination and the tactical

mastery. On the other hand, successive governments did not have a sound strategy to counter the Tamil insurgency. The two leading political parties could not set aside their bipartisan politics and form a common front. Therefore, the military could not wage a successful counter-guerrilla campaign with inconsistent political guidance. The military also contributed to the growth of the insurgency in the initial stages in the 1980s by indiscriminately harming the Tamil civilians. As things stand today, the misery of the Sri Lankan people is going to continue for some more years until a political solution to the problem can be worked out to address the Tamil grievances.

¹Anuradhapura was the first capital set up by the Sinhalese Kings nearly 2,200 years back. It would have been a sprawling city indicated by the ruins that are still existing of vast temple structures, hospitals, and palaces. Polonnaruwa is located about hundred kilometers southeast of Anuradhapura.

²K. M. de Silva, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1996), 1.

³The son of Indian emperor King Ashoka introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka around 250 B.C. It got the patronage of the Sinhalese Kings and was embraced by all the Sinhalese. Today 80 percent of the Sinhalese are Buddhists.

⁴Sri Lanka Army, *Sri Lanka-Brief Facets of Its Ethnic Conflict* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Army Head Quarters publication, 1996), 2. (Cited hereafter as Sri Lanka Army publication.)

⁵Kumari Jayawardana, *Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka and Regional Security*, (Internet: <http://www.lacnet.org/srilanka/issues/kumari.html>, 1987), 1.

⁶Thomas. A. Marks, "Disintegration of the Revolution in Sri Lanka," in *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 185.

⁷Rohan Gunaratna, *Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1997), 93.

⁸Jayawardana, 9.

⁹Mulaitivu is located in the Eastern coast area North of Trincomalee. It has a big jungle cover which helps the insurgents to run large camps.

¹⁰Rohan Gunaratna, *Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge*, 99.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 101.

¹²Mankulam is a small town situated astride the MSR about ninety-five kilometers from Jaffna. See the map for details.

¹³Killinochchi is a large built-up area located on the main supply route (MSR) about sixty-five kilometers from Jaffna. It has a major tactical value as a highly defensible piece of land. The military had built a massive bunker complex, which was captured by the LTTE. Retaking the area from the LTTE will be an essential and a very costly (in terms of men and material) task if the military is to link the MSR.

¹⁴Gunaratna, 195.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 139.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT'S COUNTERINSURGENCYCAMPAIGN

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to critically analyze various aspects of Sri Lankan government's counterinsurgency policy. The doctrinal template that will be used for this purpose will be the US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*. Certain aspects unique to the Sri Lankan case study will be further discussed in this chapter.

The Sri Lankan government's effort to curb Tamil insurgency is a classic example of political and military mishandling of a complex socioeconomic problem. Rather than treating the root causes of the problem, the political and military leaders, were trying to eradicate the symptoms. Though at times certain Sinhalese political leaders like S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake, tried to give a certain amount of autonomy to Tamil regions, those efforts were strongly opposed by the opposition political parties and the majority of the Sinhalese people. When a portion of the Tamil youths started the Tamil insurgency in late the 1970s, the government's response was to crush it militarily. The Sinhalese political leaders did not make any serious effort to alleviate the Tamil grievances that were the underlying reasons for the Tamil insurgency. The political leaders failed to persuade the Sinhalese majority to be more generous towards the minority Tamils. The Sinhalese political leaders could not rise above their own party interests to make an honest effort to solve a problem that threatened the stability of the nation.

Political and military leaders did not understand the complexities of the insurgent problem. Therefore, they failed to develop a comprehensive national plan based on civil and military action to eradicate the root causes for the insurgency. The political leaders failed to provide the military leaders with a political objective, which they could have used to build their military strategy. The military leaders also failed to provide the political leaders with a clear vision of the military dimensions of the problem. The military leaders of Sri Lankan armed forces are also responsible for the state of affairs that exists today.

National Strategy

Successive governments that came into power in Sri Lanka did not dedicate enough effort to developing political, economic, military, and social institutions that responded to the needs of the society. The political party in power was more interested in protecting its power base and maintaining its grip on power. On the other hand, the opposition party was adamant in not supporting any initiative taken by the government to solve the ethnic problem. Most of the time the government did not realize that the real threat lay in the political power of the insurgents rather than their military power. Therefore, the government counterinsurgency effort was biased on a military solution rather than on a political solution. At the same time the insurgents' strict demand for a separate state for the Tamils was a major obstacle for any political settlement.

According to FM 100-20, the four functions that a government should follow in its counterinsurgency strategy are balanced development, security, neutralization, and mobilization.¹ Balanced development is aimed at achieving national goals through

political, social, and economic means. It allows all the citizens to share the fruits of development. The open economic policies adopted by the United National Party (UNP) government in mid 1970s did not benefit the Tamil people in the North. Most of the Tamil people in Jaffna depended on agriculture. With the opening of the economy, they could not compete with the cheaper, imported products. The government did not attempt to safeguard these farmers. The farmers lost faith in the government and became supporters of the insurgents. Another discrimination was the lack of development funds going to the North and East compared to the rest of the country. The government that came to power in 1956 made the Sinhalese language the only official language. It had the unfortunate effect of alienating the Tamil speaking parts of the Sri Lankan society.

Insistence on the knowledge of Sinhala as a requirement quickly reduced the Tamil intake to state services. By the late 1970s, Tamils were seriously underrepresented in terms of ethnic percentage in the state services. Another portion of the Tamil population depended on getting a higher education thereby becoming eligible for better-paying jobs as lawyers, doctors, and engineers. With the introduction of the policies for university admissions based on proportional ethnic ratios, a large segment of the Tamil youths were deprived of university education. They too became either supporters or active cadre of the insurgents.

While discrimination against the Tamil-speaking people was growing in the fields of employment and education in the period after independence, there was another sphere in which the Tamil ethnic group felt itself imperiled: land colonization. During the early parts of this century the British initiated a program of repairing and restoring the vast irrigation systems that were built centuries ago but lay abandoned. The idea was to settle

peasants from the highly populated areas from the Southwestern and Central areas. These peasants mainly belonged to Sinhalese ethnic groups. Soon Sinhalese settlements began to appear in the predominantly Tamil Eastern province as well. This process of state aided colonization was seen by the Tamil as a threat to their political stature and to the cultural and linguistic identity.² The government did not bother to study the problem and solve the underlying reasons for the Tamil discontent.

Due to lack of knowledge and inept leadership, government could not provide protection to the people in the North and East. The government repeatedly failed to rein in the security forces when the forces committed reprisals against the Tamil civilians. The Tamil people started to view the security forces as enemies rather than saviors. These unchecked reprisals cost the government and the security forces the popular support of the Tamil people, that is the most critical aspect in a counterinsurgency. The government also failed to protect the Tamil people who were still loyal to the government from insurgent attacks.

Another fundamental error of the government was allowing the security forces to act above the law in its effort to neutralize the insurgents. Gross violations of human rights by security forces were not properly investigated and persons responsible were not taken to task. The insurgents committed similar or worse crimes but the government failed to inform the world and get world opinion to go against the insurgents. This showed a lack of effective diplomatic and informational strategy in the government plan. The present government in power has been successful in informing the world about the LTTE to a greater extent. They have shown a keen interest to investigate reports of

human rights violations by the security forces. The time taken by the country's archaic legal system to dispense with such cases, reduce whatever positive effect the government would have gained. With the mishandling of the Tamil insurgency by the government, the guerrilla movement grew in strength and the government needed more soldiers to contain it.

Mobilization if successful would maximize the manpower and material resources available to the government, while reducing those available to the insurgents.³ The government had to increase the strength of security forces both in manpower and in equipment. Unfortunately, the government's call for duty was not met with the expected response. The security forces had great difficulty lately in recruiting new troops to meet the operational requirements. New recruits were needed to replace the casualties and the large number of deserters. They were also needed to create new units. The government had difficulty persuading certain foreign governments to sell weapons and equipment to them. The previous government's bad human rights record and the effective propaganda against the government by the international Tamil lobby led to this situation. Successive Sri Lankan governments have failed to fully mobilize the people and the international support in favor of its counterinsurgency campaign. On the other hand, the insurgents have been successful in harnessing the popular support of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka as well as abroad. The insurgents too have manpower problems. To replace their mounting number of casualties the LTTE has resorted to recruiting children. Some of these children are as young as twelve years old.

To gain political advantage the political leaders set unrealistically short period to end the insurgency. Rather than educating the people about the long drawn out nature of a counterinsurgency campaign, they gave false promises to the people, asserting that the insurgency could be ended by a particular time. The military leaders came under pressure to hastily organize certain operations. Long term plans for future manpower requirements, training, and the rest and recuperation for troops were not properly worked out by the military planners. The military leadership committed all the troops they had for operations.

National Level Organization

Especially at the initial stages of the insurgency in the late 1970s, the government did not establish a national level organization to control and coordinate all the government agencies and the security forces concerned with the counterinsurgency campaign. The coordination of political, economic, social, informational, and military activities did not take place. The military conducted counterinsurgency operations disregarding the effect on the efforts of other government agencies. The government should have established civilian advisory committees consisting of government officials and leading citizens of the area to help the coordination centers monitor the success of their actions and gain popular support. Such advisory committees could have helped the coordination centers to meet the needs of the local population. There was hardly any communication with the local population and the government did not get feedback from the people affected by the government agencies' actions.

Principles

According to FM 100-20, there are four principles that guide efforts in the four functional areas to prevent or defeat an internal threat. These principles are: unity of effort, maximum use of intelligence, minimum use of violence, and responsive government.⁴ Unity of effort is to coordinate the civil and military organization actions to focus on the counterinsurgency. Successive Sri Lankan governments failed to achieve effective coordination between the military and civil organizations due to the lack of a proper organizational basis. For most of the governments that were in power, the insurgency was only one of the items in their agenda amongst several others. The full potential of the government machinery was not focused to counter the insurgency.

Maximum use of intelligence stresses the need to have timely and accurate intelligence, operational security, and counterintelligence programs to protect friendly forces and the need to counter and penetrate insurgents intelligence collection operations. The government's intelligence effort also suffers from lack of coordination. The government intelligence organizations have failed to infiltrate the insurgent organization in an effective manner. They also have not been successful in monitoring the LTTE activities in foreign countries by having a close working relationship with foreign intelligence services and by setting up their own network in those countries. There is a lack of coordination amongst the various intelligence organizations. The National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), which is manned by the police, has a vast network that covers the whole country. The Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) is the premier intelligence organization of the army. Similarly, the navy and the air force have their own

intelligence organizations. These four major organizations worked within their own compartments without maximum interaction with each other. The security forces were greatly hampered in their operations due to the lack of timely and accurate intelligence. The terrorist acts that the LTTE conducted throughout the country resulting in thousands of lives lost and billions of dollars of damage bear witness to this intelligence failure.

FM 100-20 stresses the need of judicious use of violence by the government in the counterinsurgency campaign. It is essential to examine all courses of action available to counter insurgent violence. Successive Sri Lankan governments failed to realize this fact and did not fully exploit the diplomatic, political, informational, and economic sources of power in the campaign against the Tamil insurgents. Every government that was in power from 1980 to 1998 favored the use of military over the other instruments of power. Especially in the early stages of the counterinsurgency operations in the early 1980s, the senior military planners did not consider aspects, such as psychological operations and civic action. The foundation they established for the counterinsurgency was biased towards combat operations to destroy insurgents. As time went by the Sri Lankan military realized this mistake and started to incorporate the above aspects into their campaign. However, by this time the Tamil people looked at the security forces as their enemies and leaned more towards the insurgents. The security forces lost the most critical factor in a counterinsurgency, legitimacy, at an initial stage due to their own blunders.

The last principle is the need to have a responsive government. Whichever political party came into power did not present the country a coherent program to eradicate the insurgency. They merely reacted as the insurgents went about increasing the

pressure on the government and its security forces. Fraud and nepotism were rampant among the government ranks. The party in power was more interested in finding ways to extend their rule than to find ways to tackle the insurgency. On the other hand the opposition party leaders did not do better. They did not display a genuine interest in joining the government in finding a solution. They did not spare a single opportunity to rouse the passions of the majority Sinhalese community, whenever the government in power brought forward a program to tackle the Tamil insurgency. This petty infighting between political leaders confused the public and further widened the gap between the Sinhalese and the Tamil community.

Military Strategy

The lack of a comprehensive national plan affected the development of a military strategy to support the implementation of the national plan. The military strategy should have been to provide a secure environment so that government agencies could implement the economic, political, social, and informational programs that would address the issues the insurgents were trying to exploit. The senior military leadership, especially at the initial stages of insurgency, failed to come up with a military strategy that would have met the above requirements. The military effort was mainly directed at destroying the insurgents. There was no effort to separate the Tamil people from the insurgents. In fact, the military did not distinguish the Tamil people from the insurgents as a separate entity. At times, the people were made to pay for the insurgent attacks. This was exactly what the insurgent wanted the security forces to do, in order to widen the gap between the

Tamil people and the government. Without a clear vision, the Sri Lankan security forces' counterinsurgency campaign was heading for trouble.

Operational Planning

Need for Centralized Control

Sri Lankan security forces did not have large amounts of resources to be used in the counterinsurgency campaign. Therefore, it was essential to coordinate the resources and efforts of all the security forces, i.e. army, navy, air force and the police. When taken together they possessed a formidable amount of resources. It would have been logical to have a Joint Operations Headquarters (JOH) similar to a Joint Task Force (JTF) in the U.S. army. The JOH could have been responsible to coordinate the efforts of the security forces and the police. Though at one time a JOH was established, it was not given a clear mandate and a clear chain of command to do its job.⁵ For example, the navy and air force assets were controlled by the respective commanders and were not fully coordinated to support the ground offensive. The air force and the navy did their equipment procurement without due consideration for the primary role they were supposed to play, to support the army in the ground operations.

Doctrine Development And Training

At the joint operations level a "think tank," of sorts (which should be eventually institutionalized) should have been created consisting of civilian experts and experienced military leaders. They could have acted as the principal advisers to the military and political leadership. This group would have had time to study the effectiveness of government and military programs and recommend changes to such programs where

necessary. They also could have devised new programs as the need arose. Due to the lack of such a body, there were no impartial and critical comments on the government's counterinsurgency campaign.

Any country with an insurgency problem should develop a counterinsurgency doctrine suited to the unique situation of its insurgent problem. Though the Sri Lankan security forces were established along the British army traditions, the military leadership did not properly follow the British army counterinsurgency strategy. Another big mistake committed by the Sri Lankan military during the last seventeen years is lack of proper documentation of counterinsurgency operations and lessons learned from the past battles and operations. A proper study of these documents would have helped the military to develop its own counterinsurgency doctrine. It also would have prevented the troops from committing the same mistakes and thus minimized unnecessary casualties.

In the 1970s, the curriculum of Sri Lankan military academies was biased towards the study of conventional warfare. With the development of Tamil insurgency in the country, the study of counterinsurgency was included in the syllabus. The lessons conducted were taken straight from the British army manuals. The instructions conducted were mainly on combat aspects, such as patrolling, ambushes, and raids. Other critical aspects in a counterinsurgency strategy, such as civic action, psychological operations, population and resource control, information operations, human rights, and legal aspects were not taught adequately. There was no attempt to do a thorough study of how the other countries with similar insurgency problems conducted their campaigns and to use that knowledge to educate the Sri Lankan military.

Another fact that illustrates the low priority given for counterinsurgency training is the way some of the military schools conducted training. Most of these schools were understaffed and the staff available was not suitable to train troops for combat. Some of these instructors were logistic personnel with little or no combat experience. The excuse given for the poor quality of instructors was that the experienced cadres were required for combat. The military leaders failed to realize the long-term effects of low standards in training on the performance of troops in combat.

Operational Planning

Lack of long-term planning was another major weakness in the Sri Lankan counterinsurgency campaign. Sometimes military operations were conducted to improve the image of the political party in power. This was especially common at the time of elections. With the change of political leadership, the counterinsurgency strategy changed too. For example during the early 1990s, when the United National Party was in power, military operations were conducted exclusively in the Eastern province to clear and hold that area. After three years of continuous operations and suffering hundreds of casualties, the military managed to bring the situation in the East under government control. The government managed to hold provincial council elections in the East after a lapse of many years. Once the People's Alliance Party (PA) came into power in 1994, the focus of military operations was shifted to Jaffna. Large amounts of troops and equipment were shifted from the East, making the area vulnerable to insurgent control. All the lives lost and resources spent to capture and hold the East, thus became a wasted effort. That also made any long term planning and continuity difficult to achieve.

It seemed that the Sri Lanka military was reacting to insurgent actions rather than being proactive. It was difficult for the Sri Lankan military to take the initiative since a larger portion of the forces were tied down in defending the captured areas. Fewer troops were available for offensive operations. Due to paucity of troops, refresher training was not conducted for troops for years. Incompetent leadership and poor standard of skills in the military, and the increasing efficiency of insurgents resulted in heavy casualties for the military. This had two negative effects, which further reduced the troops available for operations. The number of soldiers deserters rose at an alarming rate. By December 1998, there were nearly twenty thousand deserters. That amounted to nearly forty battalions. The other effect was the lack of enthusiasm shown by the Sri Lankan youths to the call of duty. In the 1980s, the security forces did not face any problem in recruiting soldiers to services to fight the insurgency. The unemployment rate in the country was high and the primary motivation of the soldier to join the military was employment. The mounting casualty rate in the security forces became a huge disincentive. In the recent past, the military had severe difficulties in recruitment. The quality of the soldier joining the forces dropped as security forces did not have a choice but to recruit who ever met the minimum standards for military service. The casualties in the military increased with every confrontation but the political and the senior military leadership made no one accountable for those failures.

Accountability

From the beginning of the counterinsurgency campaign, it became a routine to conduct a court of inquiry (C of I) after a major military loss. The objective of the C of I

was to find out the amount of losses in men and material, the causes that led to the incident, and finally the person or persons responsible. Senior military leaders neglected to take actions against the persons responsible for military disasters even after the courts found them responsible. This attitude towards the loss of large numbers of men, at times over thousands and equipment worth millions of dollars, caused the military commanders in charge of those installations or operations to neglect their duties. In a defense, the soldier faces a monotonous life. At times, life can be hard due to lack of supplies and bad weather conditions. In situations like that, the leadership plays a vital role to keep the men focused on day-to-day security operations. A great deal of supervision is required to make sure the operations, training, and logistic aspects are in place. The leaders failed to execute aggressive operations against the insurgents and failed to provide leadership to their organizations. Responsibility for enormous military losses was buried under the bureaucratic process. The lack of accountability led to a series of heavy losses to the Sri Lankan military, which continues today. The security forces lost six hundred men in 1993 in Poonarín and one thousand six hundred lives and millions of dollars worth of equipment were lost in Mulaitivu in 1996. This pattern was again repeated in Kilinochchi in 1998, where the military lost nearly one thousand soldiers and a large amount of equipment. No one was held accountable in all the above disasters. The Mulaitivu incident will be discussed in detail in the next paragraph to illustrate this point.

Mulaitivu Incident

Mulaitivu is a coastal town located on the Eastern coast. The military had a presence in Mulaitivu from the late 1970s. By mid 1990s, the camp grew in size and

became the base for a brigade. The camp covered a large area in the former Mulaitiuv town area. All the government buildings and houses were abandoned by this time. The camp was bounded by the sea in the East, by an open lagoon area in the West, and in the North and South by scrub jungle and palm trees. The visibility was limited to a few hundred yards in the North and South. The camp measured about five kilometers North to South and two and a half kilometers East to West. Its perimeter was about fifteen kilometers long. (See appendix C, fig. 8.)

There were two infantry battalions supported by a troop of artillery. The areas of responsibility were divided between North and South. The camp was isolated. The closest camp to south was twenty-five kilometers away in Weli Oya. The other was located about thirty-five kilometers to the North. The camp was supported by air and sea. However, there were no major incidents before the attack in June 1996. Nevertheless, there were numerous incidents where insurgent reconnaissance elements were located and killed during the past two years before the attack. The camp had a few naval personnel who operated a ground-based radar that covered the sea front. The domination around the camp was limited to a few hundred meters from the camp perimeter. The perimeter was heavily mined with nearly 100,000 antipersonnel mines and had a double concertina wire around the camp. There were large stocks of artillery and small arms ammunition, explosives, mines, food stocks, and medical supplies. The Mulaitiuv brigade came under the Division headquarters located at Elephant Pass.

This base was important for the military. Since it was the only military base located in the Eastern coast that could monitor the Sea Tiger activities and give early

warning to the naval convoys that went past this area to go to Jaffna and back. The navy could use it in an emergency at sea as a supporting base. It was also important to the military as a staging base if they were to launch operations inland.

The LTTE who were driven out of Jaffna, (their spiritual and military strong hold) in 1995, needed a major victory against the military to bolster their diminished image both locally and internationally. The LTTE continued to gather intelligence on the camp for more than two years before the attack. They also got first hand information from the artillery officer who was in charge of the guns inside Mulaitiuv camp. He was an LTTE mole who fled to the LTTE areas after the attack.

The LTTE launched its attack at midnight with a heavy barrage of artillery and mortars followed by an attack along the Northern coast. (See appendix C. fig. 9.) Simultaneously, a Sea Tiger element attacked from the sea into the Eastern coastal sector. The LTTE had nearly three thousand cadre taking part in this operation. Both these attacks managed to achieve complete surprise and penetrated the defensive perimeter of the camp. The DMI had given repeated warning on the possibility of a LTTE attack on the Mulaitiuv camp and by this time these warnings had become a routine matter. The ineffectiveness of the domination by local troops was also evident by the fact that the insurgents managed to assemble a force of nearly three thousand, unaware to the troops in the base. Along with these two attacks, the camp was subjected to a heavy artillery mortar and tank fire. The initial raiding parties soon neutralized guns inside the camp. They also attacked the brigade headquarters where the main communication room was located. By now, the whole perimeter came under heavy fire and the perimeter was penetrated from

the South and West as well. Without artillery support, the troops fought with their own supporting weapons and personal weapons at very close range. By dawn, the insurgents were everywhere inside the camp and the troops were isolated into company and platoon size forces that kept on fighting.

The military tried to reinforce the camp by a sea landing, but the Sea Tigers, which had suicide boats covering the area, thwarted these attempts. Finally, a special forces regiment with about two hundred and fifty men was airdropped on the second day evening about eight kilometers South of the base to link up with the base. However, the insurgents surrounded them too. By the third day, the whole base was overrun and a few dozen troops managed to escape into the surrounding jungles while some surrendered to the insurgents. Some of them were allegedly shot after they surrendered. The second special forces regiment was also airlifted on the third day to linkup and evacuate the first regiment. By this time, the first regiment had nearly thirty killed, including their commanding officer and another sixty wounded, and they were very low on ammunition and water. The second regiment had to fight their way through to link up with the first and this they managed to do only by the dawn of the next day, also suffering nearly thirty casualties including the commanding officer. Subsequently, the beachhead was enlarged and further reinforcements were landed using landing crafts. The following day, a decision was taken to withdraw all the troops. The troops had to do a running battle to get to the landing crafts.

The outcome at Mulaitiuv was a terrible loss to the military. The military lost nearly one thousand six hundred soldiers within a week along with a large quantity of

equipment. The insurgents too suffered heavily in the confrontations. They had nearly eight hundred killed and about five hundred wounded.⁶ Several lapses on the part of the military contributed to this defeat. Some of these lapses were as follows:

1. There was no aggressive domination of the no-mans land at least up to one kilometer.
2. There was a plan to reinforce the base by sea and air. However, these plans were not rehearsed to develop the joint coordination that was required to execute such an operation.
3. The camp itself was vast. Troops depended on the strong mine field and the bunker line along the fifteen kilometers long perimeter for a defensive battle. They did not have a strong point defense that could have been occupied in the case of an attack.
4. There was no proper supervision either by the division or the brigade headquarters of the domination or the preparedness of the camp in the case of an attack. If such an evaluation was done on a regular basis many of the above mentioned short comings would have come to light.
5. The joint tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) required to conduct relief operations were nonexistent and no one had bothered to rehearse them.

A court of inquiry was appointed comprising of senior military officers after this incident. The court found senior leaders responsible for the debacle. However, none was punished in a manner that would have sent a message to the whole military that a loss of one thousand six hundred men and millions of dollars worth of equipment in just a week was not acceptable. The Mulaitiuv episode became another set of statistics. The military leaders repeated the same blunders with devastating results in places like Killinochchi,

Paranthan, and Mankulam. Most of these outcomes can be related to one factor that is crucial for any organization to succeed. That is leadership.

Leadership

One cannot over-emphasize the importance of leadership in an organization. Leadership becomes a critical aspect especially during hard times such as fighting a full-blown insurgency. Many of the armies in the world, devised systems to ensure that only the competent were promoted and retained in the services. The Sri Lankan military leaders did not implement such a system. There were attempts to introduce a selection system for promotions but that never materialized. This situation had a negative effect on the quality of leadership in the forces. Many incompetent, and sometimes corrupt, officers were promoted and made responsible for large units for which they failed to provide the type of leadership required. At the same time, many competent officers left the services since there was no incentive or recognition given to them. Officers with little knowledge of leading men and running a counterinsurgency were put in charge of large formations from which those units suffered great losses.

However, there are many examples of effective and dedicated leaders at all levels that have done an exceptional service under very difficult conditions. Most of them have been in combat for several years and in some cases over ten years. Some have been injured more than once. It is commendable that they continue to serve in the military with years of physical and emotional hardships.

Expansion

In the late 1970s, the security forces contained only a few thousand men. With the growth of insurgency the strength of the security forces were increased to meet the growing threat. This created problems in command and control, discipline, and the quality of soldiers, that directly effected the conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign. However, the senior military leaders failed to affect the infrastructure and policy changes necessary to tackle these growing problems. For example, the officers and men who were involved in frauds were not dealt with a severe manner that would have sent a message to the whole military. The training infrastructure was not expanded to meet the growing demand to train leaders and men. Measures were not taken to reduce the heavy number of casualties that the security forces were suffering that had a direct impact on the recruitment.

Security Force Operations

Tactical Operations

In the late 1970s, Sri Lankan military personnel were not familiar with various aspects of counterinsurgency operations. As time went by, Sri Lankan security forces were able to achieve major improvements in tactics, techniques, and procedures relating to counterinsurgency. This pace was not enough to outsmart the LTTE guerrillas, as the guerrillas were a step ahead of the government forces most of the time. There were many reasons for the success of the guerrillas. In part, their success was based on the inherent advantages of the guerrillas. The other reason was the security forces' weaknesses. The guerrillas possessed a superior knowledge about the terrain upon which they were

fighting. They had access to better intelligence through their highly efficient intelligence network. They could mass forces at a time and place of their choosing and disperse immediately after a mission. They had popular support in Sri Lanka among the Tamil people and the Tamil expatriates living abroad. They were highly motivated towards their cause. On the other hand, the government security forces faced several problems in all these areas where the guerrillas had an edge.

Intelligence, which is current and detailed, is critical to plan successful counterinsurgency operations. The primary institution that was responsible for intelligence in the army, the DMI, could not provide the ground troops with detailed and current intelligence regarding the insurgents. Many operations failed and resulted in the loss of lives and equipment due to lack of proper intelligence. The blame for this failure cannot be placed squarely on the DMI or NIB. The army senior leadership should have trained ground troops to conduct long-range patrols to obtain current and detailed information on the insurgent movements and dispositions, and to verify the intelligence provided by the intelligence organizations. The security forces depended on technical sources for information. Information was mainly gathered through radio interceptions and by the use of agents. Both these sources were unreliable. An operation conducted in the Eastern coast against an insurgent camp in latter part of 1996, serves as a good example for the failure of intelligence.

This operation was conducted to attack a Sea Tiger base located about eight kilometers South of Vettalaikerni camp in the Eastern coast. (See appendix C, fig. 10.) The DMI and the naval intelligence provided the intelligence on the insurgent

dispositions and strength. The intelligence was very sketchy. A six-figure grid reference of the enemy location was given. The strength of the insurgents was given as two hundred. They were supposed to be operating a radar to track the navy convoy movements. The plan to attack this base required a ground element to come from the North to block and reinforce and a sea and air element was designated as assaulting troops. The attack was launched at dawn. Both the air and sea landings came under intensive enemy fire, and as a result two helicopters were hit and diverted to Vettalaikerni, and one of the boats was hit by a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) and caught fire. The boat was carrying special forces troops from the navy and the army. Two navy officers and several other soldiers were killed in the boat and several injured.

The insurgent positions were completely different from what was given in the intelligence briefings. Insurgents had well concealed prepared positions along the beach. Finally, the military withdrew towards the North to Vettalaikerni. Later it was found that the insurgents had suffered a few casualties in the incident. The jungle in the area offered ample cover for the military to send a small reconnaissance team to the area to gather detailed information on the enemy and the terrain. Such detailed information would have brought success instead of failure.

There is no substitute for having troops on the ground to gather intelligence on the insurgents. If a proper reconnaissance program were implemented, the ground troops would have received accurate intelligence they required conducting successful missions. These reconnaissance teams could have also given early warning to the security forces bases that came under insurgent attacks. At times when current intelligence was available

on insurgent buildups, the reaction times of the security forces were hampered by mobility.

In a counterinsurgency, mobility is essential to outmaneuver the insurgents or to make contact with them. Air mobility is a battle-winning factor. Especially in Sri Lanka, the ideal mode is the helicopter. The Sri Lankan air force had Bell helicopters and HIP Mi. 17 Russian made helicopters. The Air Force at any given time could not muster more than a few of these helicopters for an operation. These meager resources were held dispersed in several locations. The control of these helicopters was decentralized. Therefore, the helicopters were not available in adequate numbers to move ground troops to close in with the insurgent forces when opportunities came up. Another limiting factor for the Air Force helicopters was that they were not equipped to do night flying. The insurgents exploited these limitations of the Air Force to their advantage. Most of the times the insurgents attacked during night to avoid the air attacks. However, at times they attacked during daylight, knowing that the security forces would take a long time to react. The night fighting capability is an essential skill that the military leaders should have developed.

About 90 percent of the insurgent attacks on the security forces' camps have taken place during the night. The combat environment drastically changes from that of day during the night. Unless a soldier is extensively trained and equipped to fight at night, he becomes much less efficient when he is faced with night operations. On the other hand, the insurgent force train two to three months continuously at night before attacking a

security force camp. By the time, the insurgents complete rehearsals and training for an attack, the night is almost like day for them.

Defensive Operations

Security forces have lost most of their men and equipment in the past, trying to defend large camps and detachments against insurgent attacks. These attacks initially were mounted against platoon and company-sized detachments. As the insurgents grew in strength they became bolder and mounted large scale attacks against brigade-size security force camps. Even after repeated disasters in which the security forces lost large number of soldiers and equipment, the senior military leadership did not do a thorough study on the incidents and enforced effective methods to counter the insurgent threat.

The large defenses depended on a long line of bunkers called the forward defense line (FDL). The FDL concept was necessary to provide security for large areas that were captured. In the FDL concept, a bunker line surrounds the whole area. The bunkers are located every thirty to forty meters depending of the terrain. The area forward of the bunker line was mined and concertina wire was employed. A two-meter high earth wall was built in the gaps between bunkers. The bunkers were manned day and night by two to four soldiers. The command and control, fire support and logistic elements were located inside the bunker line.

Although most of these defenses had strong points built, the troops hardly rehearsed, especially at night, the best ways to occupy and fight inside them. The Troops in these defenses did not have an aggressive patrolling program where they could have

prevented insurgents reconnoitering the defenses and gaining critical early warning when the insurgents mounted attacks.

Insurgents would normally reconnoiter a security force camp for months and in some cases even a year before they mounted an attack. Once they had sufficient information, they made a model of the target and rehearsed especially at night until they perfected the attack plan. They breached the FDL in two to three locations by concentrating direct and indirect firepower into those selected breach points. Once the breach was done the insurgent groups came inside the defense and straight away headed towards the designated targets. In fact, the attack is a well-coordinated series of raids conducted simultaneously. By dawn, the insurgents dispersed from the area carrying whatever they had captured. At times, the insurgents occupied the defenses they captured from the security forces if the location had a military value for holding it. Military's Killinochchi defense complex and the LTTE attack mounted in early 1997, is a good example to illustrate the above.

The Killinochchi defense complex under the command of a division included four infantry brigades with the supporting armor, artillery, and engineer units. The defense stretched nearly twenty-seven kilometers North to South and six to four kilometers West to East. (See appendix C, fig. 11.) The LTTE attempted to overrun the base on two previous occasions but failed to achieve the objective though they managed to inflict heavy damage to the military. On this occasion, they mounted simultaneous attacks from the Southeast and West, preceded by a heavy artillery and mortar barrage. They had small special teams infiltrated before the attack, which helped to guide the raid parties

and direct the fire to neutralize military's gun positions and command posts. They used a captured T-55 tank or two and an explosive filled armored vehicle that was driven by a Suicide Tiger to make a hole in the Southern perimeter. The battle raged for two days and by the second day, the military had to withdraw the Southern most defense line up to the South of Parnthan. The military lost nearly one thousand men and a further seven hundred were wounded. A large quantity of weapons, ammunition, and other supplies were also lost.

Several weaknesses in the security forces' defensive operations caused these repeated failures to withstand insurgent attacks. Foremost was the fact that the FDL concept violated the principles of defense, such as depth, mutual support, and all-around defense. Most of the defenses had strong points constructed behind the FDLs, for troops to occupy in case of an insurgent attack. However, troops hardly practiced under realistic conditions especially at night on how to occupy and fight in these strong points. This is especially difficult to do with the confusion of heavy combat unless the troops have rehearsed until they mastered the drills. To prevent the insurgents achieving surprise when they mounted attacks, the defending troops should conduct aggressive patrols in the area well forward of the FDL. An aggressive patrol program would have kept the insurgent reconnaissance parties at bay and troops would have gained the critical early warning of insurgent build up before an attack. This did not happen in most of the defenses due to lack of close supervision from higher headquarters, incompetent leadership and lack of skills and confidence amongst the troops to go on patrols forward of the defenses.

The lack of a properly rehearsed counterattack plan was another factor that contributed to the failures. These plans existed at the operations rooms, but troops hardly rehearsed them in realistic settings. The plans to employ air and naval assets in case of insurgent attacks were not properly rehearsed in advance and resulted in chaos when these assets were deployed during insurgent attacks.

Jungle Operations

The jungle is another environment where the soldier should be highly trained to fight if he is to succeed against the insurgents. Similar to night combat, jungle combat requires a unique set of combat skills that a soldier has to master by continuous training and combat experience. The insurgent had an advantage in living in the jungle. He knew the terrain, how to live there and how to fight in the jungle.

Most of the infantry soldiers were not properly trained in jungle combat. They lacked skills required for jungle combat such as, jungle discipline, marksmanship, camouflage, and navigation that are critical for jungle combat. They lacked skills and equipment to patrol the jungle in small groups. A typical jungle operation was conducted using several infantry battalions. Most of the times surprise was lost before the troops were inducted to the jungle. The troops also lacked certain basic equipment like compasses in adequate numbers. The military planners while spending millions of dollars on tanks and guns failed to realize that in counterinsurgency operations it was the infantry soldier who has to close in with the insurgent to neutralize him.

For example, basic equipment like compasses should have been given to individuals, if not at least issued one to a squad. However, there were only ten to fifteen

compasses available for a whole infantry battalion with nearly five hundred men. Some reserve battalions have only two or three. It was the same situation with the maps. Most maps were outdated and were not available in adequate quantities. Another example was the ration pack issued for the operations. The twenty-four-hour ration pack contained only 2,400 kilocalories. A soldier carrying an equipment load more than seventy pounds in tropical combat environment needs a minimum of 3,500 kilocalories for a period of twenty-four hours. Repeated requests to improve the ration pack were turned down citing the high costs involved. Similarly, the soldiers do not get adequate clothing and web gear as replacements for their worn out gear and clothing.

In Sri Lanka's closed terrain, tanks and armored personnel carriers have a very limited role to play in fighting a guerrilla force who resort to a wide variety of hit and run tactics. Therefore spending large sums of money on this costly equipment must be weighed against the benefits that could be achieved. The argument here is not to say that armor units do not have any useful role to play in a counterinsurgency.

Sri Lankan security forces have yet to acquire the equipment necessary to evacuate a casualty through the high canopy jungle using a helicopter. Therefore, some soldiers died due to injuries because they were brought on a stretcher for several hours until an open area was found where a helicopter could land. By this time, the injured soldier would have succumbed due to shock. This factor deeply affected the morale of the soldier who was involved in jungle combat.

Amphibious Operations

This is another area of operations that has been neglected by the Sri Lankan security forces. Though several amphibious operations have been conducted in the past, there was no effort to develop joint tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) to conduct such operations in a more efficient way. Therefore, many problems arose in command and control, communications, intelligence, and fire support. There were no reconnaissance elements especially trained to conduct maritime reconnaissance. Therefore, operations were planned without adequate data and information. The results of these operations at times were disastrous and many soldiers and pieces of equipment were lost.

The navy did not have stabilized fire control systems to provide accurate naval gunfire to support the ground troops. There were also problems due to the lack of compatible communications. The army and navy used different kinds of radios with different frequency ranges. The embarkation and disembarkation drills from a landing craft (LCM) especially under low light conditions were not rehearsed adequately before the operations

So far, the Sri Lankan security forces have failed to neutralize the “Sea Tiger” threat, that is, the naval arm of the insurgents. The security forces have not studied the Sea Tiger threat in detail nor have they formulated a joint army, navy and air force strategy to combat this threat. The Sea Tigers pose a grave threat to the sea lines of communications of the security forces. They also assist the insurgents to bring in their logistics from outside the country.

Special Operations Forces

The special operations forces (SOF) can play an important role in counterinsurgency operations due to the unique set of skills they possess. Sri Lankan security forces have three types of SOF troops. There are two Commando battalions and three special forces battalions that focus mainly on counterinsurgency operations. There are also three airmobile battalions, which are trained to conduct airmobile operations. These SOF units were established to conduct specific operations that a normal infantry battalion could not do. However, over a period they have evolved into battalions with large numbers capable of conducting infantry tasks. As the normal infantry battalions lost their capabilities gradually due to lack of training and ever increasing casualties, SOF units were pressured to undertake those responsibilities. SOF unit strengths were increased to meet the mounting operations duties. With this, the standard of a SOF soldier declined.

The trademark of any SOF organization is the ability of a SOF soldier to operate in small groups of four to twelve men. However, the Sri Lankan SOF units were utilized in company and battalions for operations. Over time, SOF soldiers lost the confidence to operate in small groups. One cannot execute certain tasks by going in large numbers. Long range reconnaissance patrolling was one such task.

The necessity to have detailed and accurate intelligence on the insurgents and terrain to mount successful operations was discussed earlier in this chapter. The most effective way to get such information would have been to employ long-range

reconnaissance teams. These teams would have provided higher headquarters with the information they needed to plan operations. They also could have provided early warning on impending insurgent attacks. Similarly, small SOF teams could have been used to penetrate deep into insurgent territory and ambush supply convoys, insurgent leaders, and troop columns. They also could have directed other forces to attack insurgent camps or directed air assets and artillery fire to destroy such targets.

Summary

The Sri Lankan nation and its people have suffered enormous losses due to the self-serving and shortsighted policies of their political leaders. The military leaders too, were responsible for aggravating the situation by clumsy handling of the counterinsurgency campaign especially at the initial stages. Nearly 60,000 lives have been lost so far including military personnel, insurgents, and civilians. Thousands of people have been displaced and their property destroyed or abandoned. Billions of dollars worth of resources have been lost in this bloody war. There are many lessons that can be learned from the Sri Lankan case study that can be helpful in devising a strategy to solve the ongoing conflicts and dealing with insurgencies around the world. Many more lives are likely to be lost before a solution to this drawn-out conflict is brought to an end.

¹U.S Army, FM 100-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington DC: US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1990), 2-8.

²Kumari Jayawardana, *Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka and Regional Security* (Internet: <http://www.lacnet.org/sriLanka/issues/kumari.html>. 1987), 9.

³F.M 100-20, 2-9.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Thomas. A. Marks, "Disintegration of the Revolution In Sri Lanka," in *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London UK: Frank Cass, 1996), 242.

⁶Rohan Gunarathna, *Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge*, (Indiana: Notre Dame University, 1997), 101.

CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to suggest solutions to the present insurgent crisis in Sri Lanka. Problems will be addressed at strategic, operational, and tactical level in the government and in the military. The origins of Sri Lanka's problems do not simply stop at the Tamil insurgency. They go back many decades or even centuries. Therefore, the solutions will also take longer to take effect. Politicians, who are ever eager to cling to power, always forget the protracted nature of counterinsurgency and come up with short-term solutions with disastrous results. The rapid growth of the Tamil insurgency from a band of a few dozen guerillas to one of the most efficient in the world displays the incompetent nature of the government's handling of this complex problem. This chapter will try to untangle some of these problems and suggest actions that can be taken to conclude the conflict.

The government actions to be taken will be discussed under diplomatic, informational, economic, and social headings. The military actions will be discussed under strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

National Plan

Clearly defining the political objective of the campaign is the first step in devising a counterinsurgency campaign. In this case, the political objective should be to reestablish

government authority in the Tamil areas in order to implement government development plans. This political objective must always be borne in mind in developing the other plans concerning the diplomatic, informational, military and economic aspects. The politicians must ensure that this political objective is not changed at frequent intervals as governments change hands. Frequent changes in political objectives will lead to confusion and ultimate failure. The next step in developing a national plan is to examine what helps the government in achieving its political objective. In Sri Lanka's case, it is the capability to sustain the counterinsurgency campaign for an extended period. The insurgents will try to weaken and destroy the government's ability to sustain. The ways and means used by the insurgents to do this were discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The government's sustainability will depend on its political will, the will of the people, armed forces, economy, international support, legitimacy, infrastructure, and popular support.

Popular Support

The government's political objective must be to further democratize and develop the Tamil areas. The government's proposed devolution package to the Tamil areas is the stepping stone for that process. As counterinsurgency specialist Tom Marks states, "Consequently, as has happened in the Philippines, we see evidence that political change is as basic to successful resolution of an insurgency as social and economic development."¹ However, since coming to power in 1994, the People's Alliance government has not been able to ratify this package and offer it to the Tamil people. Speaking on the Philippine insurgency, Tom Marks states, "Tactically it must be borne in mind that previous efforts to implement a solution have foundered on the time element. In

dealing with an insurgency, speed in implementing a solution, even if it is only a perceived solution, is necessary. Dithering is interpreted as double-dealing.”² If this process can be stepped up and the devolution package offered to the Tamil people, the government can gradually turn away the Tamil peoples support to the insurgents. Speaking of the Philippine insurgency again, however, retaking the final areas held by insurgents, which are substantially fortified, had no meaning unless carried out within a political solution designed to address those grievances that have allowed the insurgents to recruit their manpower.³ The military will also get a huge boost to their counterinsurgency effort if there is some tangible thing like devolution that can be offered to the Tamil people.

To gain the popular support of the Tamil people, and to maintain it, the government will have to work in a few other critical fronts as well. Providing them a secure environment is one of them. This can be achieved by strictly monitoring the human rights issues and improving the security in these areas. An efficient intelligence network and civil military cooperation is vital for security. The international nature of the LTTE activities makes it essential that the government use its diplomatic power to harness the international support for its counterinsurgency effort.

International Support

The government must use diplomatic avenues to expose the LTTE’s true nature and attempt to persuade countries like UK, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, France, and East European countries to stop the fund raising activities and weapons procurement of the LTTE in those countries. According to Rohan Gunaratna, a noted counterinsurgency

specialist, "The Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have not yet conducted a comprehensive study on the LTTE international network and developed a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy. Towards this end, an interministerial committee for defense and foreign affairs must be established. A committee comprising of the Secretaries of defense and foreign affairs, Director General of Foreign Affairs, Director of NIB, Director of military intelligence, Director of Information and relevant officials must meet periodically to assess the threat, review government progress and task relevant agencies to produce and disseminate counter propaganda."⁴ Professionals who can counter the LTTE propaganda in a more aggressive way should staff the Sri Lankan embassies in the relevant countries.

The insurgent's information campaign is directed at the Tamil Diaspora and the international community. They use the Internet, seminars, newsletters, and various other publications very effectively to gain publicity to their cause and to discredit the Sri Lankan government. The Sri Lankan government should realize the potential of the Internet and get a set of professionals to concentrate on the use of the Internet to make its information campaign more effective than the LTTE. The same professionals should develop a national psychological operations campaign that will target both the local and international audiences. In a prolonged campaign, an effective psychological operations program can sustain the will of the people to keep faith on the government's actions to fight the insurgency. If not, the people will gradually lose their will and ultimately the insurgents will become successful in achieving their objectives. The economic factor is a major player in a counterinsurgency. It is also a root cause for the insurgency and it is

vital for the government to keep the economy buoyant to sustain the counterinsurgency campaign.

Economy

The current defense expenditure to fight the insurgency runs up nearly 12 percent of the government's total budget. This is a huge cost to a country like Sri Lanka, which has a large foreign debt and host of other problems typical to a third world country. The government should implement measures to reduce corruption, waste in government institutions, and educate people to conserve scarce resources. The government should continue to promote foreign investments in the country. To attract foreign investment the government must improve the security situation around the country by countering the LTTE's sabotage and attacks on the economic targets in Colombo and around the country. A well-coordinated intelligence effort, harnessing the public to play a role in the improvement of the security, and strict population control measures are some of the actions that the government will have to implement to improve the security situation.

The other aspect of economics in the counterinsurgency campaign is the economic development in the Tamil areas so that one of the root causes for the insurgency can be eliminated. With the improvement of security of Tamil areas, government must double its effort to develop the agriculture and industry in these areas. The government bureaucracy can be a big obstacle to the speedy implementation of these projects. The civil military leadership should keep this in mind and intervene whenever necessary to clear such obstacles. Once the economy develops in these areas the people are less likely to sympathize with the insurgents and the government is more likely to get their loyalty. The

legitimacy of the government is another factor the insurgents will always try to undermine with all their might.

Legitimacy

A Government's legitimacy is dependent upon factors such as control of corruption in government ranks, making political and military leaders accountable, and safeguarding the rights of people. Measures, such as media freedom, empowering the judiciary will go a long way in improving the legitimacy of the government.

Reducing corruption in the government ranks is a big challenge for any government especially in the developing countries. However, a determined political leadership can achieve this, like Singapore did in its early stages of nation building. Government should empower organizations, such as a bribery commission to investigate any wrongdoing and to take legal action against the ones found guilty irrespective of their position.

A country's media can play a vital role if it is freed from overt and covert measures that a government takes to control it. The people of the nation should be given the right to know exactly what is happening to their sons and daughters who are involved in the conflict, how the financial and other resources of the country are managed by the political leadership, the conduct of politicians and other leaders. A censorship on the report of insurgency is currently enforced on the Sri Lankan media. Even some of the senior government ministers, like the foreign minister, have stated that the censorship of the press is hurting the counterinsurgency. The Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadiragamar in a recent interview with the BBC's *Asia Today* said, "My personal opinion is that the

censorship of the press must be lifted as quickly as possible because it is not serving our interests.”⁵ Rather than censoring the media, what the government should do is to study how the media can be used to aid in its counterinsurgency effort. The people of the country should be told the truth in order to build confidence on the government. The media freedom will also act as a check on certain political leaders and government officials' actions that are corrupt and irresponsible.

The country's judiciary too should be strengthened to make the democracy more potent. Sri Lankan judiciary, which is archaic, should be overhauled to meet demands of the emerging society. The judiciary should be able to bring to justice any citizen of the country irrespective of position or power. A stronger judiciary can also control military excesses that take place at times.

The government faces another challenge as they build the infrastructure in the Tamil areas. That is the creation of an alternative Tamil leadership to challenge the LTTE's claim as the sole representative of the Tamil people. Until now, the LTTE has been ruthlessly decimating any political or military challenge that has come up from other political and former insurgent organizations. However, government must improve the security situation and nurture an alternative Tamil political leadership that will have democratic values as their guiding principles. Hand in hand with these efforts, the government should also create conditions that will facilitate bridging the gap between the Sinhalese and the minorities

The government can take several steps in the sphere of social and cultural aspects to create a more harmonious relationship between all races. The government must create

a national identity that will transcend the race barriers. If a nation like U.S. could do that after the civil war that pitted two parts of the country against each other in 1860s with hundreds of thousands of lives lost, surely Sri Lanka should be able to achieve the same with a focused program and a protracted effort. The government must make it a national priority to educate all citizens in English to make it the link language that will enable all the communities to communicate with each other. This measure will have a further benefit to the development of the country as a whole to make the country's population more educated and competitive in the global economy.

It is also important to give a cultural awareness of each other to all communities especially beginning at an early stage in the children's schooling. The Philippine case is an example in this regard. President Ramos appointed a National Unification Commission (NUC), headed by a professor of law, charged with drawing up a comprehensive package for reconciliation with which all can live.⁶ The Sri Lankan government should initiate a healing process that will address the ethnic prejudices that has taken root during the last few decades. If the common people of all the communities can treat each other with respect and dignity, they can ultimately defeat the chauvinists in all communities, which is a major barrier for a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict. Apart from the government, the military has a very important role to play in solving the current crisis. Especially in a situation when the insurgents are strong and have to be dealt militarily in order to, bring them to negotiations.

Military Effort

The first thing the military planners should do is to develop a sound military strategy that would facilitate the achievement of the government's political objectives. The military planners should always remember not to forget the primacy of the political aspects in a counterinsurgency campaign. Despite the transformation of the conflict in its military sense, though, the essence of the struggle remains the same, a political conflict that demands a political solution.⁶ Once a sound strategy is established, the operational and tactical plan can be made to achieve the strategic aim. The military should secure its base areas before commencing operations into insurgent controlled areas. By using the oil slick method (operations are conducted from the government controlled areas into the insurgent dominated areas in a gradually expanding way) this can be achieved. A maximum number of troops must be employed on mobile strike operations rather than tying them down to defensive perimeters. The military strategy should not only address how to deal with the insurgents but also other groups that have a stake in the conflict such as Tamil civilians, other Tamil militant groups, Sinhalese and Muslim people, and finally own troops.

Tamil People

In insurgency, who ever win the loyalty and trust of the people ultimately wins the war. It is a battle for the hearts and minds of the people. There are many things that the military can do to win the Tamil people over to their side. The military should provide the Tamil, Muslim, and Sinhalese in operational areas a secure environment. In the cleared areas citizens committees can be formed amongst the people to safeguard their security

and rights of the people. The military leadership must ensure that the people are protected from the insurgents as well as from the excesses of the military. They must investigate complaints from the people without a delay and punish those found guilty. The military must find ways to improve communication with the people. These communication links can bring greater benefit to the military in the form of intelligence once trust is established with the people. Educating the soldiers on the social and cultural systems of the people and the importance of safeguarding the human rights of the people will no doubt go a long way in building the trust between the people and the soldier.

Once an area is secured, civil affairs can also contribute in a significant way in building the trust amongst the people. The military in the area can help the people in building their schools, houses, temples etc., with the help of various non-governmental agencies (NGOs), and private voluntary organizations (PVOs). The army's Civil Affairs Directorate can educate the soldiers on how to conduct civil affairs operations and also help to coordinate these operations with various civil organizations in the area. Military psychological operations programs aimed at the Tamil people can have a substantial impact on the success of winning the people over. However, they should be planned and conducted properly by a set of professional officers. The military's Psychological Operations Directorate must be revamped and if necessary expertise must be hired from outside to plan and coordinate the military's psychological operations program which should be more focused and aggressive than the present operations. Other militant groups also have a substantial stake in the current conflict. If properly used, they can be of a great help to end the conflict.

Other Militant Groups

The other militant groups have at least openly given up their demand for a separate state for Tamil people. Instead, they are willing to settle for greater autonomy for the Tamil areas. Their cadre is fighting the LTTE along with the government forces. They are of a great value due to the intimate knowledge of the terrain and the people in the Tamil areas. They also can be formed into strike groups to be used against the LTTE. These militants must be trained with a view towards finally absorbing them into the military that can offset the current imbalance in the ethnic structure of the military, which is predominantly Sinhalese. But the military must be careful in doing this since there can be insurgents infiltrated by the LTTE to these organizations. In today's context the main barrier to a peaceful settlement of the conflict is the LTTE. Therefore, a major portion of the military effort and resources should be focused on weakening the LTTE to bring them to negotiations.

The LTTE

To defeat the LTTE, one has to neutralize their ability to project combat power. The LTTE's combat power is derived from their combat elements, leadership, infrastructure, (political, financial, intelligence organization, and international procurement) international support, command and control systems, lines of communications, the dedication of the cadre to the cause, loyalty, morale, and popular support.

Doing two things can neutralize the effectiveness of the LTTE combat power. One is to reduce the strength of the existing LTTE cadre in combat operations and the

other is to take measures to reduce the mobilization of LTTE cadre. The most effective way to reduce the combat strength of the LTTE is to maximize the contacts with them in combat. To achieve this, the military has to undertake a radical change in the way they conduct their operations at present. The military must get out of the defensive complex system and adopt an offensive and more mobile kind of warfare. The soldiers must be trained to operate in small groups which give them many advantages, such as; ease of achieving surprise, ease of command and control, better chances making contact with the enemy, and offers more flexibility. In situations where the LTTE uses a large strength to attack a military patrol or camp, there should be mobile reserves lifted by helicopters to the area to inflict maximum casualties on the insurgents. The coordination between the ground troops and the fire support element and the close air support element is vital to gain best results in a situation like this.

The other method to reduce the combat power of the LTTE is to slow the mobilization and stem the flow of arms and other supplies to the LTTE. In the past, the Sri Lankan military has been the main source of LTTE arms and supplies losing large amounts of weapons, equipment, and other logistic items to the LTTE during insurgent attacks on military camps. This trend can be changed in two ways. One is to do away with the defense complexes, which give a false sense of security to troops and opt instead for a strong point system of defense. The other is to train the soldiers in conducting offensive operations in order to keep the insurgents on the run. It is also important to make the leaders personally responsible for failures in these defenses if they are found to have neglected their responsibilities. To stem the flow of the supplies from outside the

country, the military will have to dominate the whole coastal area by creating strong points along the coast. This concept will be discussed further below in detail.

An effective psychological operations program can counter the mobilization of the LTTE. The military will have to be extremely careful and civil when dealing with the Tamil civilians in order to build trust and confidence. As discussed earlier, the people must be offered a tangible alternative like autonomy to speed up this process. When the people see a better future for them under the government, they will stop giving their sons and daughters to the insurgents. Until this alternative is offered to the people, the numbers of insurgents killed or captured is useless. The insurgents can continue to replace those lost. The Sea Tigers play a prominent role in the LTTE's combat capability. Therefore, it is very wise for the military to have an effective plan to neutralize them utilizing joint resources of the army, navy and the air force.

The Sea Tigers play a multiple role for the LTTE. They attack the Sri Lankan naval and sea lines of communications (LOCs) that are the lifeline to support the government's effort in Jaffna. They are responsible for the delivery of LTTE logistics coming from Tamil Nadu and other external bases ashore. They also have posed a threat to the air force by shooting down a few aircraft. The neutralization of the Sea tigers will have a huge impact on LTTE combat capability and sustainability. For the Sea Tigers, the coastal bases they operate are vital for survival. If the military can take control of the coastal areas, the Sea Tigers can be made ineffective. The merits and demerits of such a course of action will be discussed later in this chapter.

To take on the Sea Tigers at sea will be the task of a combined effort of the navy and the air force. The navy should do a thorough study of the Sea tiger modus operandi and develop counter measures. Developing a technological edge with high-speed boats and long range weapons can reduce the much-feared Black Sea tiger capability of suicide strikes.⁷ The recent success shown by the navy seems to indicate that they are on the correct path to achieving that goal. However, there is a lot to improve on how the joint assets of the air force and the army can be coupled with the navy to accomplish this task. Particularly in times of war, navies must develop their force structure to meet the challenges posed by enemy naval structures and designs. With regular loss of men and material, the presence of a conventional navy has become a burden. The Sri Lankan navy should be transformed into a fighting navy with a clear mission to destroy the LTTE Sea Tiger capability.⁸ The government forces do not yet properly identify the LTTE air capabilities. The evidence gathered so far indicates that they have obtained one or two fixed wing light aircraft or helicopters. Though not a severe threat at the moment, given time, the LTTE can develop this into a formidable one like the Sea Tigers. Therefore, the military has two options to deal with the air threat. One is passive countermeasure such as air defense systems, which can be deployed to guard essential installations. This can be a costly method since there are numerous likely targets that has to be guarded with costly air defense systems. The other method is to use active countermeasures such as to locate and destroy LTTE air assets. This may be a difficult task given the nature of security the LTTE would provide for these assets. However, it will be far less costly and more effective than the air defense systems. The military can deploy its reconnaissance assets

to locate the airfields where the aircraft operate from and either bomb them or mount direct assault to destroy the aircraft. It is important that the military initiate a project at the earliest to deal with the air threat rather than waiting until it becomes a formidable one. The leadership of the LTTE provided by a cult leader like Prabhakaran, is the glue, which has kept the LTTE together as a disciplined and formidable force. It is critical that the military planners think of methods to get rid of Prabhakaran.

Once the head is cut off from a beast, the body becomes confused and ultimately dies. Similarly if Prabhakaran is neutralized the LTTE will face a severe crisis since he has not nurtured any alternative leadership to replace him. He has always been suspicious of members of his organization that have shown any threat to his authority and had no regrets in liquidating such persons. It is said that the LTTE leader is protected twenty-four hours a day by a very loyal set of insurgent bodyguards. It may need only a small reconnaissance element and an well-aimed bomb to do the job. If the military can narrow down the location to a few dozen kilometers, a few such teams may have a chance to locate his hideout. Once located, a surprise air attack will have a fair chance of liquidating the target. Another possibility is to keep the suspected area under surveillance and the roads covered by small strike elements to take him on if he ventures out. Another way to reduce the command and control (C2) system is to degrade the effectiveness of LTTE radio communications. This can be done by jamming or by locating and attacking the communications bases. The military already resorts to jamming but the second method is hardly attempted.

The Sri Lankan military does not concentrate on harassing the LOCs of the insurgents. If done properly it will have severe effects on the LTTE logistics, C2, combat effectiveness, and morale. Highly trained small teams capable of operating for extended periods behind the enemy lines should be developed to execute these operations. If air and artillery assets are incorporated, these teams can exert tremendous pressure on the LTTE logistics. Threatening sea LOCs should also be considered because they depend on them for most of their external supplies. A short term plan to dent LTTE procurements reaching Sri Lanka would be, for the army, navy and the air force to operate with close intelligence support to monitor LTTE activity in the Mulaitivu area.⁹ The Sri Lankan military abandoned its year long effort named "Victory Assured" to capture the main route linking Jaffna and Colombo after suffering heavy casualties in excess of two thousand dead and several thousand injured. However, the requirement to link Jaffna and Colombo by a ground route remains a priority for the success of counterinsurgency operations in the peninsula. It is prudent to examine another course of action that can achieve this objective.

The Coastal Option

An offensive along either the Western or Eastern coastal line will offer numerous advantages to the military, along with a few disadvantages. The foremost advantage in a coastal advance, especially on the East Coast, is that it can neutralize the Sea Tiger bases, which are posing a great threat to the military sea LOCs. The successful completion of a coastal offensive can secure the vital sea, ground, and air LOCs for the military. When the coastal areas are dominated by the military, the LTTE external

support from Tamil Nadu and other external bases can be drastically reduced. It can also have a major effect on LTTE morale, as they will not be able to send their casualties for advance treatment to Tamil Nadu.

In the case of neutralizing LTTE ground combat elements, the open and semi-scrub terrain in the coastal areas provide the Sri Lankan military a good opportunity to more effectively employ its superior firepower. The air force will be able to target insurgents more easily than in the jungle areas. Naval gunfire could also be brought into action. The opportunity to use both the naval and air assets would give the military superior mobility. Helicopters can be used for airmobile operations and landing crafts can be used for amphibious assaults. If operating in a jungle environment the military will not be able to use these assets. The conduct of a coastal offensive will require a great amount of coordination between all three services. The coordination can be achieved by doing joint planning and joint training.

The defense of the coastal areas, once they are captured will need much fewer numbers of troops compared to a defense in a jungle area. Since the coastal area is more open compared to inland, troops can be deployed spread out. The sea flank of the defense can be guarded with even a fewer number of troops. The availability of multiple LOCs in a coastal area will give the military commanders tremendous flexibility in the conduct of operations and in logistics. If the military can regain the control of the coastal areas, it can help in improving the fishing industry along the coastal belt. This can have a positive impact on the economic development of the area fishermen. Currently, the government has imposed a ban on the deep-sea fishing. If the military controls the coastal areas, the

fishermen can be allowed to do deep-sea fishing. With the overwhelming number of advantages mentioned above, that comes with a coastal offensive, there are some disadvantages and difficulties too.

A major difficulty will be to get the three services to coordinate their joint war fighting effort, which is very critical for an offensive of this nature. This coordination can be achieved by joint training and joint planning at all stages of the offensive. The interoperability of command and control structures is vital to achieve the joint coordination. The other difficulty is to neutralize the LTTE Sea Tiger and the ground threat to the military's amphibious assaults. The military will have to obtain weapon systems that can effectively neutralize these threats. Though the terrain favors the attacker in coastal areas, numerous water obstacles which are found along the Sri Lankan coastal belt in the form of lagoons and waterways hinders the mobility. The military planners will have to think of bridging equipment; air cushion vehicles and other means that could improve the mobility in this terrain. Establishment of bridgeheads to secure the far side of obstacles by using an airmobile force or amphibious force should be studied in detail and thorough training should be conducted before the operation to ensure success.

Targeting insurgent LOCs during the offensive by special forces teams operating behind the enemy lines will have a big impact on the sustainment for the insurgents in their defensive effort. In order to attain its military objectives, the Sri Lankan military has to implement certain improvements and changes in its command and control, infrastructure, doctrine, training, and methods of operations. These aspects will be discussed in detail below.

Miscellaneous Aspects

Priority must be given to establish a Joint Operations Headquarters (JOH), among the same lines as a Joint Task Force (JTF), in the U.S. military. JOH can ensure the unity of effort of all three services and the police in the counterinsurgency effort. The JOH should be responsible in drafting the short and long term plans, and the conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign. The JOH commander should be given the full authority over the employment of resources under all three services and the police. He should consult the three service commanders in preparing his plans. JOH should be staffed with the most competent officers who are capable of planning and coordination. The command and control structures that were used in other countries in counterinsurgency operations can be studied and adopted to suit the Sri Lankan scenario. The quality of leadership is another issue that should be addressed by the senior military leadership. Weak and incompetent leadership has already become a major factor causing large losses and negatively affecting the progress of the military.

Incompetent leadership at various levels is a major crisis in the Sri Lankan military today. Several facts have led to the present situation. They include, the death of experienced and competent leaders, the early retirement of such officers and the absence of an effective system to weed out the weak leaders. However, most of the leaders at the junior and senior level have years of practical experience but they lack the theoretical knowledge on counterinsurgency to put that practical experience to better use. Therefore, immediate steps should be taken to improve the knowledge base of the military leadership. This is a process that will take the time and resources that today's senior

leaders are reluctant to provide. It is essential that they think in the long term and implement a program to achieve that. The establishment of a Staff College in 1997 was a step in the right direction. However, the opportunities available to the junior officers and non-commissioned officers to improve their counterinsurgency knowledge, are very poor.

The current system of promotion adopted by the Sri Lankan military should be changed to be in line with most of the professional militaries around the world. The promotions must be based primarily on merit and to a lesser degree on seniority. The military can study the systems adopted by a few armies around the world and devise a process that suits the local situation. Accountability of military commanders who are in charge of certain operations and camps has to be improved too. Unlike in the past, the military leaders who fail in their duties due to negligence and incompetence must be punished and removed from command if necessary. During the Vietnam War, the South Vietnamese Prime Minister Thieu imprisoned a general for three years for failing to secure his area of responsibility against a North Vietnamese attack. Such harsh measures may be necessary at times like this, where the future of a nation or the lives of thousands of soldiers may depend on the decisions and conduct of a leader. Other than the leader, the quality of the soldier too is a critical requirement for a successful military. The high rate of casualties has directly affected the recruitment.

Today, the military finds it difficult to fill the ranks with the required numbers to replace casualties and absentees. When the military needs thousands to join them, only a few hundred appear for interviews. There are two major reasons for this. One is the high rate of casualties amongst the military. The parents of young men eligible to join the

military discourage their sons and daughters from joining in fear of losing them. Another reason is that the young people of today can find employment outside the military for a reasonable wage. Therefore, most of them who join the military today are the ones who cannot find employment in the civilian sector. To solve this problem the government will have to increase the wages of the military and make it more financially attractive to join.

The high rate of casualties plays a major role in sending the absenteeism to a high level. Poor man management is another contributing factor. The senior military leadership should take steps to reduce the casualty rate by improving force protection measures and making the leaders more accountable to the fate of the men under their command.

The Sri Lankan military's soldiers have been fighting the insurgency for a long period without a break. There is no properly planned timetable for them to be rotated from operations to get some rest and recuperation. Nor do they get any substantial refresher training. Therefore, soldiers have not done proper refresher training for up to three to four years. The senior military planners should take this into account, in their planning and keep out at least two-brigade strength units at a time for training and rest. They must plan their operations with the rest of the manpower resources available to them. Unless this is done, the soldiers will be caught in a vicious cycle of continuous operations that drain them both physically and emotionally. Any military must evolve their doctrine to suit the fluid nature of the environment they operate. This can only be achieved by training their organizations constantly to meet the new challenges and evolving new doctrine, techniques, procedures, and tactics.

It is surprising that an army can fight a serious insurgent threat for nearly seventeen years and yet not have a professional body to study the lessons learned. Thousands of lives and enormous amounts of resources have been lost in the military for not learning from their past experience. Therefore, a center for lessons learned should be established with immediate effect to perform this task. Officers and men who have varied types of battle experience and a knack for keen observational skills should staff this organization. Most of the armies around the world have an organization to perform this important task. Unless steps are taken to improve the counterinsurgency knowledge base of leaders and soldiers, they will not be able to deal with the complex nature of counterinsurgency operations. The schoolhouses have a heavy responsibility to implement programs to achieve that goal.

The curriculum of all the military schoolhouses should be revised by a panel of experienced officers and civilian experts on counterinsurgency to reflect the Sri Lankan military missions at present and in the future. The Sri Lankan military has faced three insurgencies so far, including the ongoing Tamil insurgency. The military will be engaged in the present conflict until a political solution can be implemented to solve the problem. In the future too, the Sri Lankan military may get involved with a variety of operations referred to as military operations other than war (MOOTW), such as peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian operations, to name a few. Therefore, three fourth of the instructions should be focused to the in-depth study of MOOTW in all schoolhouses including the staff college. Especially in a counterinsurgency, the military's

capability to operate in small groups in any terrain, both day and night is a vital factor in achieving the tactical victories on the battlefield.

Night Fighting

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Sri Lankan military has an aversion to operate at night, where as, the insurgents have made the maximum use of night for their success. To make a change in this situation the military must look for new ways to enhance the night fighting capabilities of the soldier. Training the soldiers thoroughly on night fighting skills, equipping them with night fighting equipment, and getting at least fifty percent of troops in a unit to reverse their sleep cycles for a specific period, are some of the steps that can be taken to enhance the night fighting capability. The air force and the navy should also improve their night fighting capability since they have to play a critical supporting role for the ground troops. The jungle is another important environment, just as the night. The Sri Lankan soldier has to improve his skills on how to live and fight in a jungle.

Jungle Fighting

Apart from the special forces, the commandos, and a handful of other infantry battalions, the rest of the soldiers in the infantry battalions lack the jungle discipline and skills vital to fight and survive in a jungle environment. The military should immediately set up jungle schools close to operational areas with the help of special forces instructors that can train a large number of infantry soldiers in jungle skills. Jungle discipline, marksmanship, navigation, small group operations, ambushes, patrols, and jungle survival are some of the critical skills that should be taught to these soldiers. Soldiers

must also be adequately equipped with items such as compasses, global positioning systems (GPSs), maps, lightweight radios, and others. The air force will have to obtain equipment that will enable them to evacuate a casualty through a canopy jungle. The Sri Lankan military's major losses in the past occurred not during the offensives but trying to defend camps against insurgent attacks. However, the senior military leaders have not paid adequate attention to the underlying problems of these appalling losses.

Forward Defense Line (FDL) System

Sri Lankan military planners must study the present concept of forward defense system they have adopted to secure the base areas from insurgent attacks. The reasons for this failure were discussed in Chapter 3. What can be done to rectify these failures will be discussed in this paragraph. A major weakness in the FDL system is the lack of depth and mutual support. This can be overcome by having a series of strong points within the FDL where the troops can fall back provided they get adequate early warning to do so.

Lack of early warning to the defending troops had been one of the major reasons for the success of insurgent attacks. Early warning can be achieved by getting a minimum of one third of the force to go out of the perimeter at least one kilometer from the FDL during night and day and dominate the no mans land. The commanders at all levels must be held responsible to ensure that this domination takes place. However, the FDL system should be done away with as soon as the security situation improves, since the system makes the troops less aggressive and less mobile.

Apart from the flaws in the FDL concept itself, the senior military leadership should address various other factors such as lack of training for the soldiers, poor

leadership at various levels, and lack of equipment, to prevent these horrendous losses of men and material in the future.

¹Thomas. A. Marks, "Disintegration of the Revolution in Sri Lanka," in *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 247.

²*Ibid.*, 246.

³*Ibid.*, 247.

⁴Rohan Gunaratna, *Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1997), 117.

⁵*Foreign Minister's Visit*: (Sunday Times, 18 October 1998 Colombo, Sri Lanka) 8.

⁶Gunaratna., 241.

⁷*Ibid.*, 193.

⁸*Ibid.*, 192.

⁹*Ibid.*

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Sri Lanka is yet another unlucky country to experience a prolonged insurgency, which has taken a great toll on human lives and affected the country's economic and social fabric. The root causes have been the perceived relative deprivation experienced by the Tamil community under successive Sinhalese dominated governments. Several communal riots that took place in the past aggravated the situation. As the conservative Tamil political leadership failed to secure the political demands of the Tamils, certain sections of Tamil youths resorted to an armed struggle to gain an independent homeland called Eelam for the Tamil people. This thesis has attempted to unravel the causes for the failure of the government and the military to deal with the Tamil insurgency.

Lack of a clear political objective during most of the period was a major stumbling block that affected the focus of the government's effort. The government did not do a thorough enough study of the root causes of insurgency at the initial stages. Therefore, once it was done, the government could have developed a national plan based on a political objective. The lack of a national plan was especially felt in the military effort against the Tamil insurgency. Whatever the military achieved in operational and tactical terms did not result in contributing to an ultimate political objective. Lack of unity among main government agencies undermined the government's counterinsurgency effort. Though the National Security Council functioning under the President was responsible for the execution of the government strategy, it failed to achieve the

synchronization of the multitude of agencies involved in the process. The situation was the same with the military branches. There was no Joint Headquarters to coordinate the military effort amongst the army, navy, and the air force.

Successive governments that came into power could not give the kind of positive and honest leadership to the people. Corruption and nepotism in the government ranks eroded the confidence of the people of all communities. Excessive use of violence was another factor that complicated the situation. The Government failed to provide security to the people, especially the Tamil people. Intelligence, which is a critical requirement to fight an insurgency, was lacking. The government failed to coordinate the effort of intelligence organizations at the national level, which would have contributed, to effective intelligence production. Despite these failures, the government has learned from past experience and taken many steps to correct these weaknesses. However, the government and the military will have to face several challenges in the future in their effort to counter the insurgency.

Gaining the support of people of all communities to the proposed devolution package is a major challenge for the government. Devolution is the key to a political solution. The support of the opposition political parties, both Sinhalese and Tamil, is also crucial for the government to successfully implement the package. The financial burden to keep the counterinsurgency effort going is a drain on the country's economy. Surprisingly, the government has managed to keep the economy growing irrespective of the insurgency and the Asian economic crisis. However, maintaining a healthy economic growth will be a continuous challenge for the government in order to fund the

counterinsurgency effort. In the highly interdependent world of today, the maintenance of international support to the government will be a crucial factor. Especially, as the government is heavily dependent on international loans, foreign investments, and international weapons procurement. The military will also have a pivotal role to play in the counterinsurgency campaign. It will face a different set of challenges just as complex as the government.

Developing a strategic direction to the military counterinsurgency campaign that will enable it to meet the political objective will be the foremost challenge for the senior leadership of the military. They should develop this by employing a panel of experienced military leaders with the help of civilian experts. Once the politicians set the political objective, they should refrain from getting involved in the military decision making process. Unity of effort is another area of immediate concern to the military in order to synchronize the efforts of all three services to achieve the strategic military objective. The military leaders should develop a joint command and control structure and joint doctrine to achieve unity of effort. Another growing challenge for the military is how to mobilize the human and material resources required executing a prolonged counterinsurgency campaign. Acquiring the material resources for the military will be task of the government. However, it will be the task of the military to preserve the existing human and the material resources.

The military should immediately address the issue of high rate of casualties and absenteeism to improve morale. An effective training program will be a major panacea for the above mentioned problems. The senior military leaders have a moral

responsibility to fight political pressures that want them to achieve certain objectives within unrealistic time frames. The senior military leadership has already used battle-fatigued soldiers for continuous operations without giving them regular opportunities for training, rest, and recuperation. If the leaders do not safeguard the soldier, the most valuable asset, they will not have an army of soldiers to command.

Winning the intelligence battle against the insurgents is another daunting task for the military. More accurate, detailed, and up-to-date intelligence is required for military operations. On the other hand, strategic intelligence is required of long term planning. The military leaders should address minimum use of violence, too. Soldiers must be educated on human rights, and the importance of winning the hearts and minds of the people. The aspirations and demands of the people is also an important aspect to consider. What are the options available to the Tamil people under the present circumstances?

Tamil people must realize the futility of the dream of a separate nation. Instead, they must put pressure on the government, the Tamil political leadership, and the LTTE insurgents to agree for greater autonomy to their regions. They must also stand up against the forceful recruitment of their children and brutalization of their society by the insurgents. The people must nurture the development of an alternative Tamil political leadership to the insurgents. Tamil people should develop stronger bonds with the other communities. They must devise ways to interact both culturally and socially with the Sinhalese and Muslims. Backing the government efforts for devolution for the Tamil areas will bring greater benefits to the Tamil people, rather than perpetuating their misery

by backing the insurgents. The perceptions of the Sinhalese and the Muslim people are also vital for the resolution of the conflict.

Both the Sinhalese and Muslim people must support the government to implement the proposed devolution package. If they oppose, the package would be doomed and the country will continue to suffer the consequences for many more years. People must also become more aware of politics and their rights as citizens must to prevent politicians from taking them for a ride. People must demand that the government control corruption, inefficiency, and nepotism. They must also pressure the government to free the media and strengthen the judiciary. Being the majority community, the Sinhalese must become more generous towards the minorities and give them an equal opportunity in every respect. The LTTE insurgents, will be key to a solution to the problem.

The LTTE leadership must reevaluate the possibility of achieving a separate homeland for Tamils. If they consider the realities of the situation, it becomes obvious that their objective is not a practical one. For one reason, India would never entertain a separate state for Tamils in the North of Sri Lanka, as that might encourage Tamil Nadu to secede too. The other factor the LTTE must consider is whether they can defeat the government's ability to sustain the counterinsurgency effort. For that the insurgents will have to neutralize government's military, degrade the economy and destroy the will of the people. For the last seventeen years, they have not been successful in achieving any of those objectives. As the true nature of the LTTE insurgents gets to be known internationally, their international support has started to decline. In such a scenario, it is unlikely that they will be successful in achieving their ultimate objective even in the

future. Therefore, the sooner the LTTE leadership comes to grips with reality the better it will be for the people they are supposed to save.

The LTTE must think of an exit strategy from this conflict. The safest and the best way out for them would be to develop a political infrastructure in the organization and commence negotiations with the government. They have a very good chance of providing leadership for the Tamil people by joining the democratic system. The longer they take to do this, the lesser their support will be among the Tamil people. Therefore, the LTTE is at a crossroads today, that will decide their fate.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary question that this research tries to answer is, how could the Sri Lankan government and the security forces effectively deal with the Tamil Insurgency? To answer this question successfully, the two sub-questions mentioned in the same chapter have to be answered that is: what went wrong in the Sri Lankan counterinsurgency and what can be done to solve the problem? The context and background underlying these questions are addressed in Chapter 1.

This research will be done using the historical research method. The root causes and the unfolding of the Tamil insurgency over the past two decades will be described in Chapter 2. The objective of this chapter will be to present social, political, and historical background of the Tamil insurgency. It was written with the author's experience and knowledge on the subject. Secondary sources, such as books, magazine articles, and Internet, were also used extensively. Several retired U.S. military personnel who served in Vietnam were interviewed to get their firsthand experience about the subject. The facts from these secondary sources were verified by cross-referring them with numerous other sources, such as books and articles.

In order to come up with an answer to the primary question, it was necessary to examine how insurgencies were dealt with in other armies around the world. There is a large collection of examples from other militaries throughout various eras. I have selected three such cases for this thesis. U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in Philippines,

British experience in Malaya and Kenya, and the Indian PeaceKeeping Force (IPKF) operations in Sri Lanka were the cases that were studied. The U.S. counterinsurgency strategy set out in FM 100-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* and the British counterinsurgency doctrine as discussed in the book *British Experience in Counterinsurgency: 1919-1960* by Thomas R Mockaitis will be used as the templates during the whole research.

The third chapter deals with how the Sri Lankan military handled the Tamil insurgency for the last seventeen years. It is essential to do this critical analysis to bring out the lessons learnt during the seventeen years of fighting. As a member of the Sri Lankan armed forces, I have been involved in counterinsurgency operations for almost fourteen years. I have tried my very best to give an unbiased account of what went on during this period. I had an opportunity to witness the growth of the Tamil insurgency from infancy to its lethal form today.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to formulating a viable counterinsurgency strategy to combat the Tamil insurgency and at the same time to address, the underlying causes for the insurgency. Finally, the fifth chapter presents some concluding remarks.

APPENDIX B

LITERATURE REVIEW

Finding books that have been written objectively is a major challenge in doing a research into a conflict that stretches back centuries. Most of the literature available on the Sri Lankan problem has been written either from the Sinhalese or from the Tamil perspective. However, several books and articles have been written objectively. The literature that was used for this thesis could be categorized into two types. Those that address the historical, social, cultural, and economical background to the problem and the others were the ones that address the counterinsurgency aspects to the Sri Lankan problem.

The historical, social, political, and economical background to the Sri Lankan problem can be studied by reading a number of books written by prominent Sinhalese, Tamil and independent authors. Professor K. M. De Silva has written a number of books that gives the Sinhalese perspective of the Sri Lankan problem. His book titled *The Traditional Homelands of the Tamils. Separatist Ideology in Sri Lanka-A Historical Appraisal* (1994) gives an account of the Tamils claim for a separate state from a Sinhalese point of view.¹ A book by the same author titled *Regional Powers and Small State Security: India ad Sri Lanka, 1997-90* (1995) covers the Indian involvement into Sri Lanka's problem and the implications of that involvement.² Another of his books *Ethnic Conflict, Management and Resolution* (1996) gives a detailed account of various social, economic, and political perspectives of the problem.³

There are several books, which were written by Tamil and non-Tamil authors, those illustrate the Tamil perspective of the problem. Chelvadurai Manogaran and Bryan Pfaffenberger's book titled, *The Sri Lankan Tamil: Ethnicity and Identity* (1994), covers the historical, sociological, and political aspects of the problem from a Tamil perspective.⁴ Mr. Narayan Swamy's book titled *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas* (1994), gives a detailed account of the origins, development, and the objectives of various Tamil militant groups.⁵

There are several books written by independent observers on the Sri Lankan problem. These books are valuable in getting an unbiased account of the problem. The book titled *Sri Lanka's History and the Roots of Conflict* (1990) edited by Jonathan Spencer is a collection of articles written by authors of varying disciplines, such as anthropology and history.⁶ William McGowan's book titled *Only Man is Vile* (1992) portrays various social and political aspects of the Sri Lankan problem in a highly readable narrative form.⁷

The U.S. Army manual titled FM 100-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* (1990), can be used as a basic guideline to analyze the Sri Lankan problem.⁸ The book titled *the British Experience in Counterinsurgency: 1919-1960* (1988) by Thomas R. Mockaitis describes the British counterinsurgency doctrine and several case studies, that can be used to compare and contrast the Sri Lankan counterinsurgency campaign.⁹ Several books and articles written by a number of counterinsurgency specialists who have specialized on the Sri Lankan problem are invaluable sources to analyze the problem. Mr. Rohan Gunaratna, a noted expert on the Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas and the

counterinsurgency efforts in Sri Lanka has written a number of books and articles during the past decades. His book titled *Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge* (1997) traces the growth of the main insurgent group, the Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Ealam, popularly known as the LTTE, and analyzes the strategy and modus-operandi of this group.¹⁰ This book also puts forward various recommendations on how to deal with the Sri Lankan problem in terms of diplomatic, political, military, informational, and economic perspectives. Thomas A. Marks, a former U.S. army intelligence officer who is now teaching counterinsurgency in various U.S. military schools, has written several articles on the Sri Lankan problem. His book titled *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam* (1996) gives a detailed account of the Maoist nature of the Sri Lankan Tamil insurgency and the Sri Lankan government's response to it.¹¹

With the proliferation of the Internet, both the insurgents and the Sri Lankan government has used the Internet extensively to spread their message across the globe. Additionally, there are several web sites and home pages maintained by various news agencies, newspapers, and news services that can be of a great value to gather information on the Sri Lankan problem.

¹K. M. de Silva, *The Traditional Homelands of the Tamils, Separatist Ideology in Sri Lanka-A Historical Appraisal* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1994).

²K. M. de Silva, *Regional Powers and Small State Security: India and Sri Lanka, 1977-90* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995).

³K. M. de Silva, *Ethnic Conflict, Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1996).

⁴Chelvadurai Manogaran and Bryan Pfaffenberger, eds. *The Sri Lankan Tamils: Ethnicity and Identity* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

⁵M. R. Nrarayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to guerrillas* (Delhi, India: Konark Publishers, 1994).

⁶Jonathan Spencer, ed. *Sri Lanka: History and the roots of Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁷William McGowan, *Only Man is Vile: The Tragedy of Sri Lanka* (New York: Farrar, Stratus and Giroux, 1992).

⁸U.S. Army, *FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, (1990).

⁹Thomas R. Mockaitis, *The British Experience in Counterinsurgency: 1919-1960*, (Wisconsin, U.S.A: University of Wisconsin, 1988).

¹⁰Rohan Gunaratna, *The Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge*. (Colombo, Sri Lanka: University of Notre Dame, 1997).

¹¹Rohan Gunaratna, *The Changing Nature of Warfare: LTTE at the Razor's Edge*. (Colombo, Sri Lanka: University of Notre Dame, 1997).

APPENDIX C

FIGURES

SRI LANKA IN RELATION TO INDIA

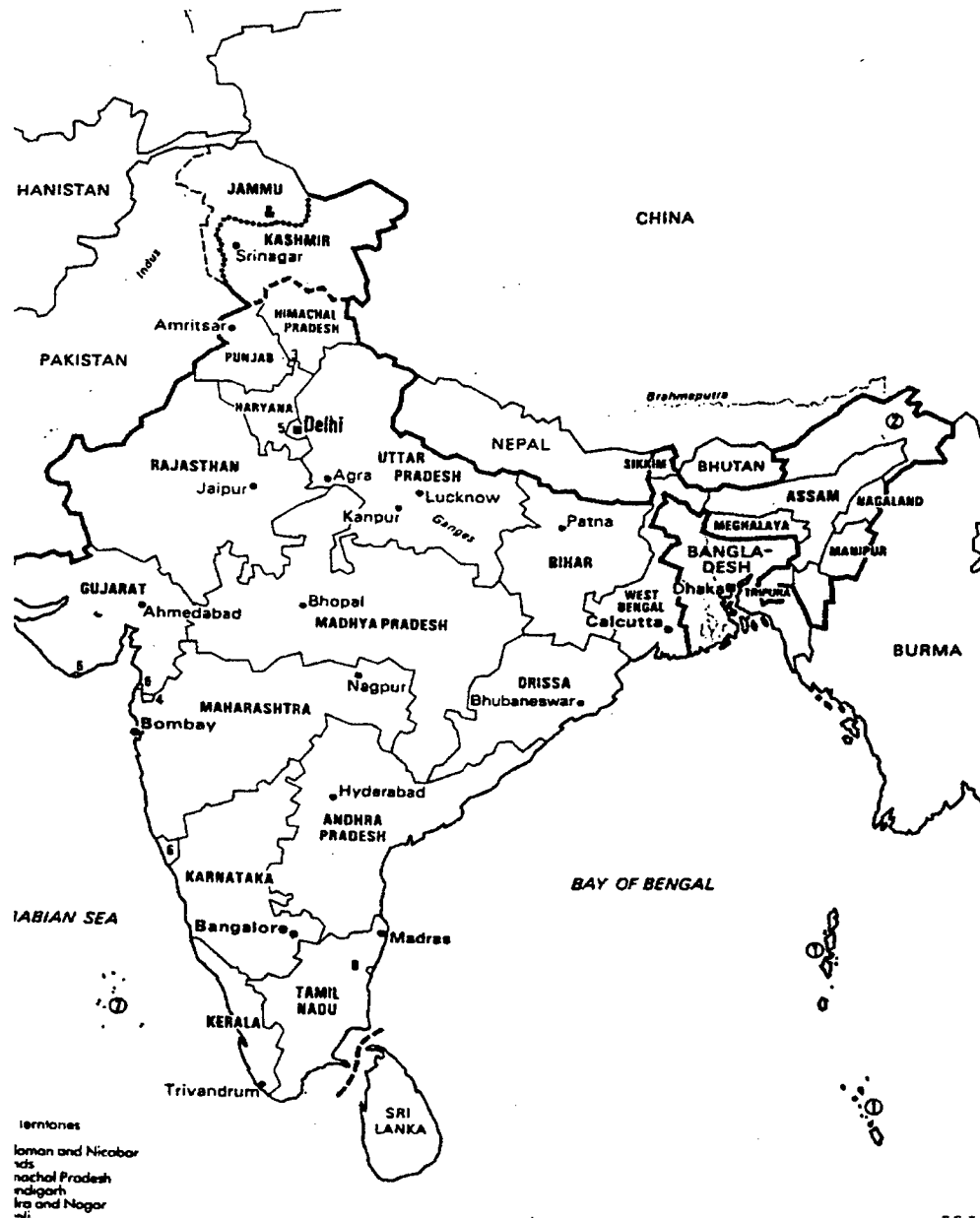


Figure 1. Source: Thomas A. Marks. *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam* (London, UK: Frank Cass, 1996), 175.

PROVINCES OF SRI LANKA

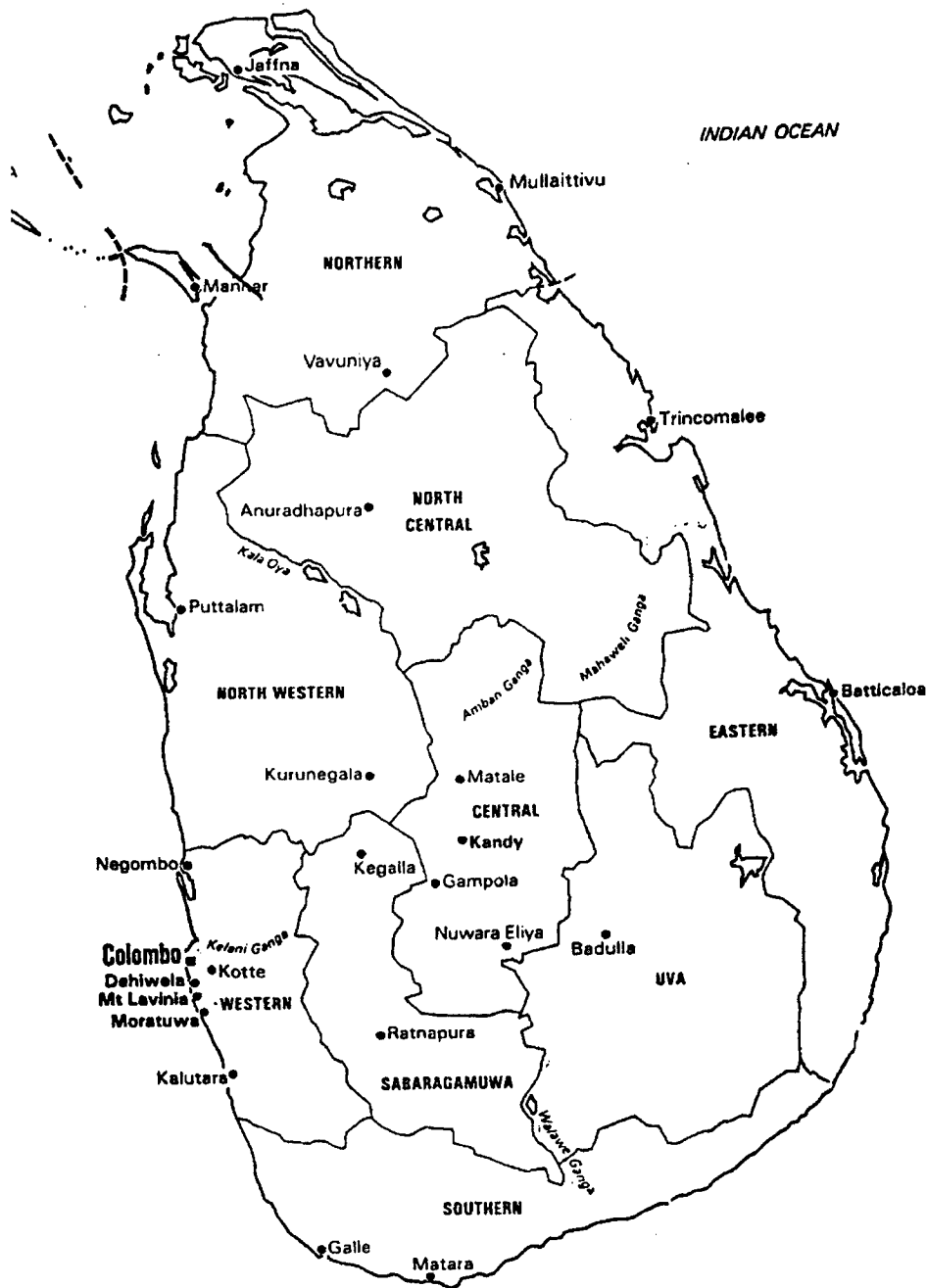
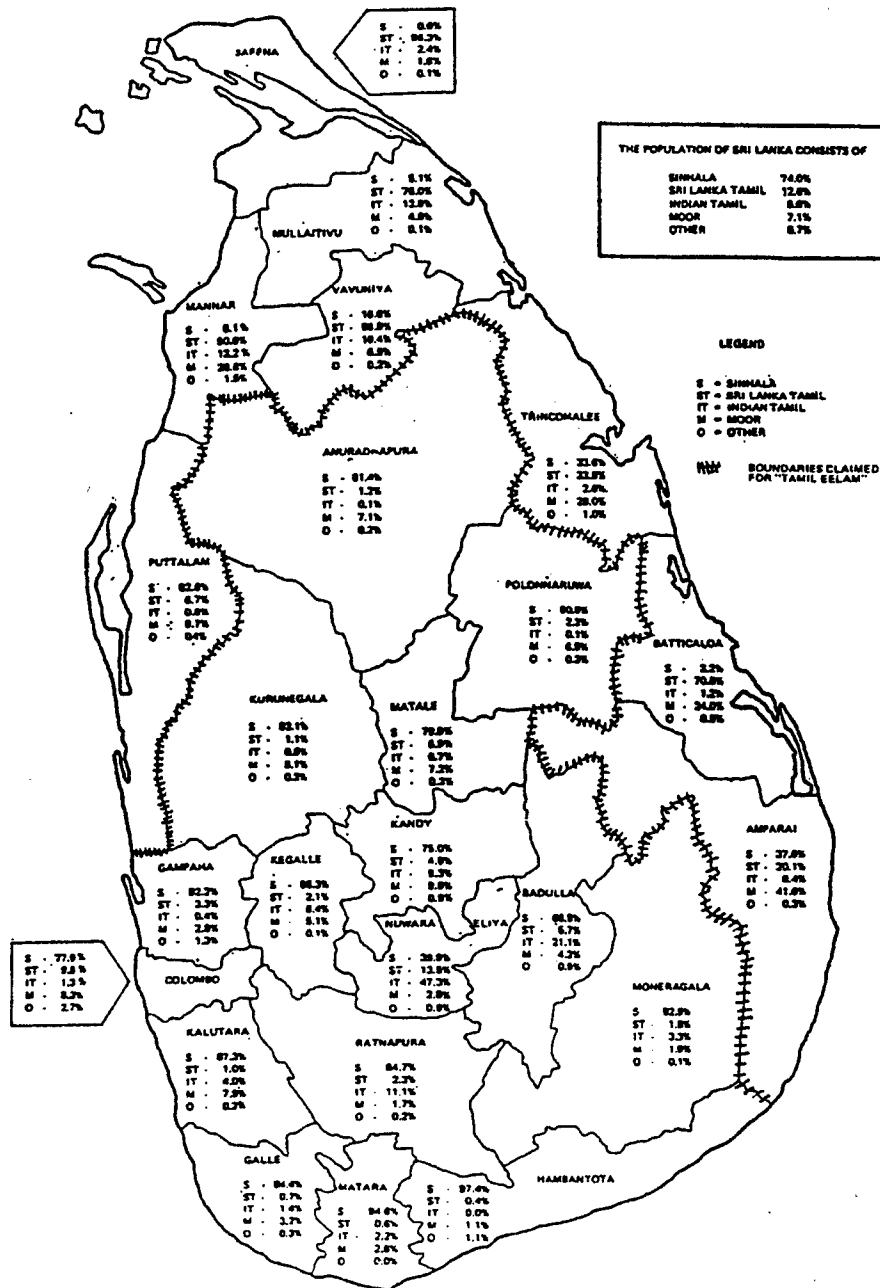


Figure 2. Source: Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam* (London, UK: Frank Cass, 1997), 177.

SRI LANKA: DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION (1981 CENSUS)



Note: 'Sri Lanka Tamil' is the term now used in government documents for 'Ceylon Tamil'. The latter term remains in use in much of the literature.

Figure 3. Source Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam* (London, UK:Frank Cass, 1997), 101.

LTTE'S TERRITORIAL CLAIM – EALAM



Figure 4. Source: *LTTE Home Page* (Internet: <http://www.tamil.ealam.com>), 1.

LTTE SUPPLY BASES IN TAMIL NADU DURING 1988-89

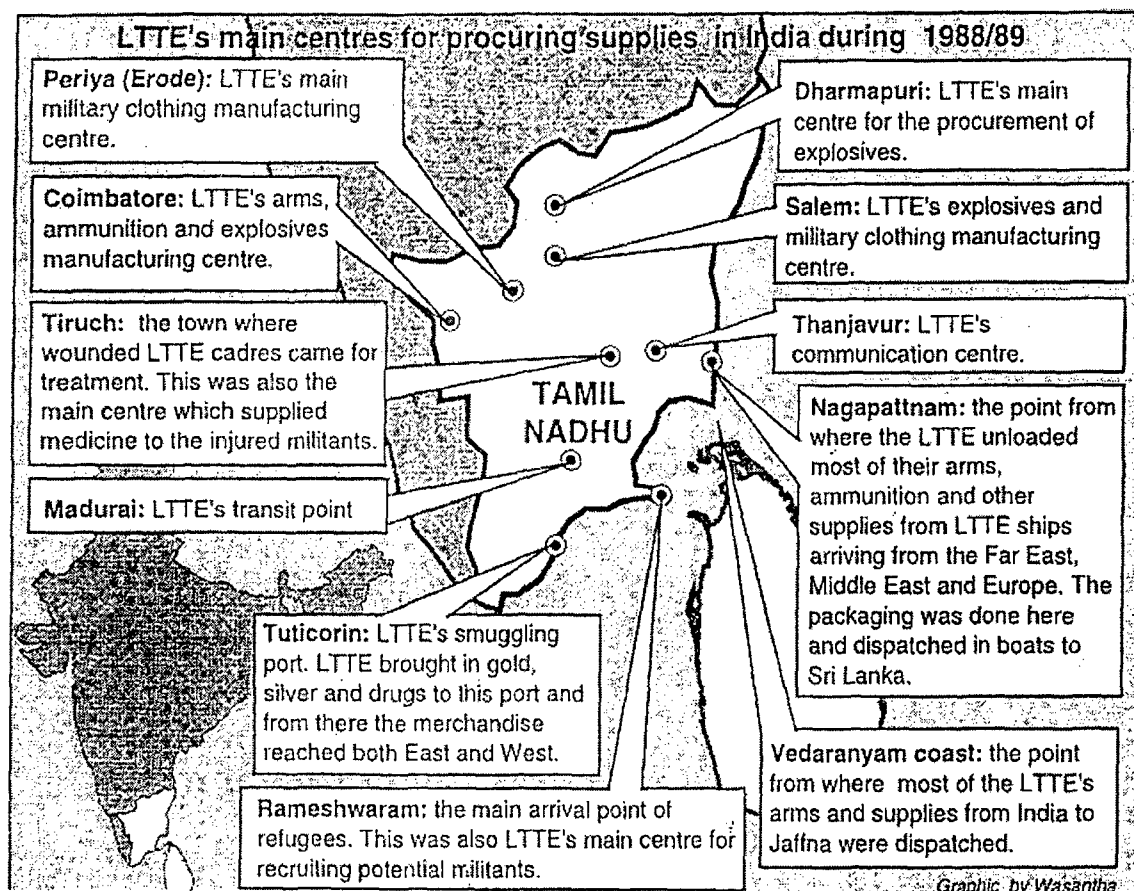


Figure 5. Source: Rohan Gunaratna, *International and Regional Security Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Taprobane Bookshop, 1997), 63.

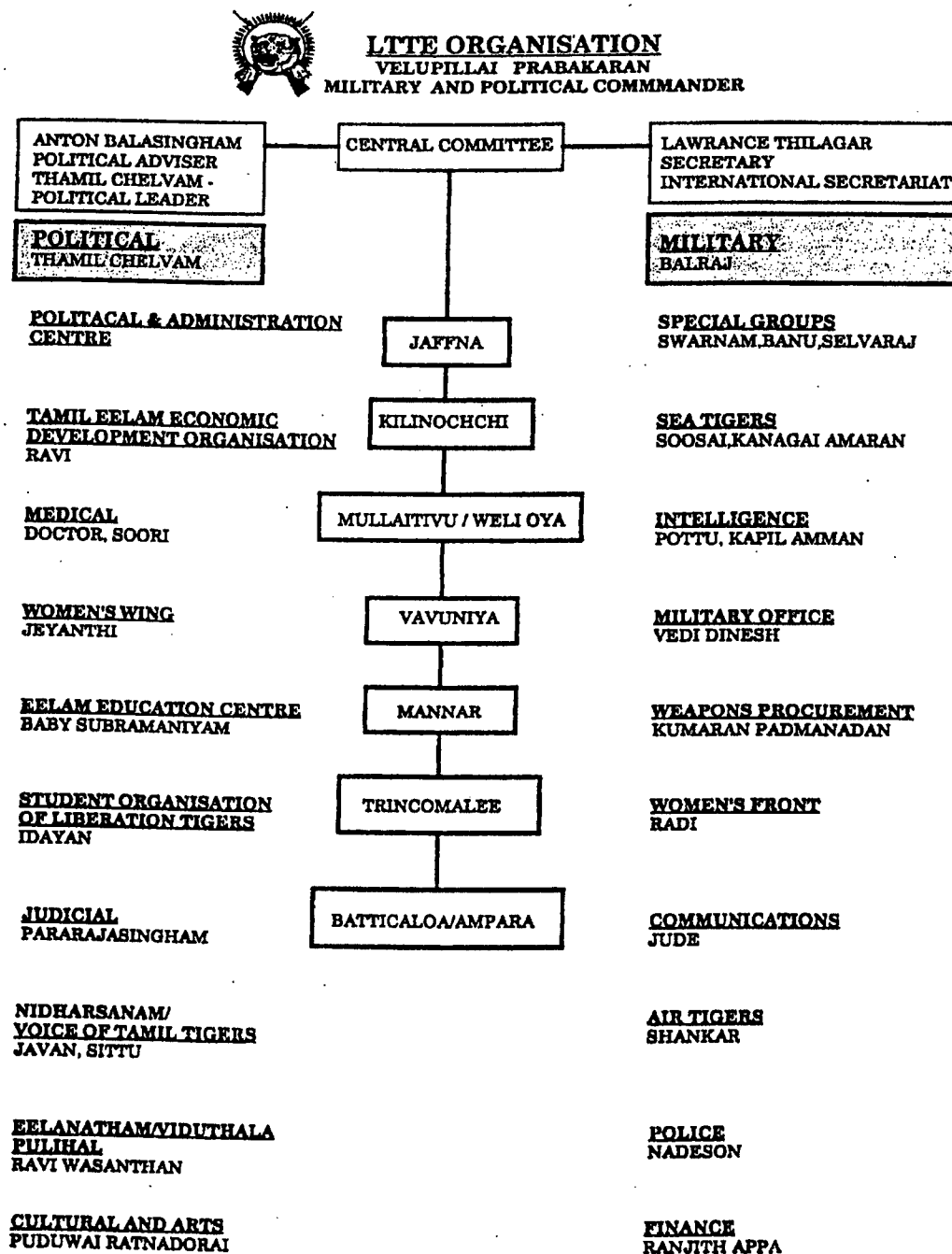


Figure 6. Source: Rohan Gunaratna, *International and Regional Security Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Taorobane Bookshop, 1997), 47.

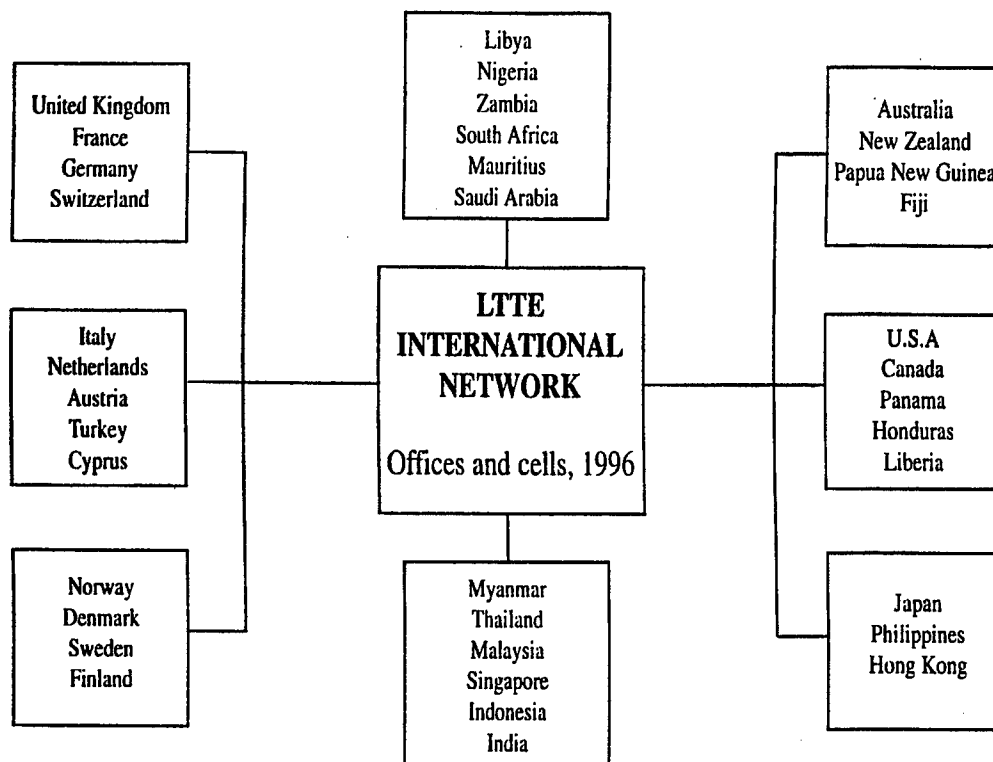


Figure 7. Source: Rohan Gunaratna, *International and Regional Security Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Taprobane Bookshop, 1997), 5.

LTTE ATTCK ON MULAITIUV CAMP IN JUNE 1995

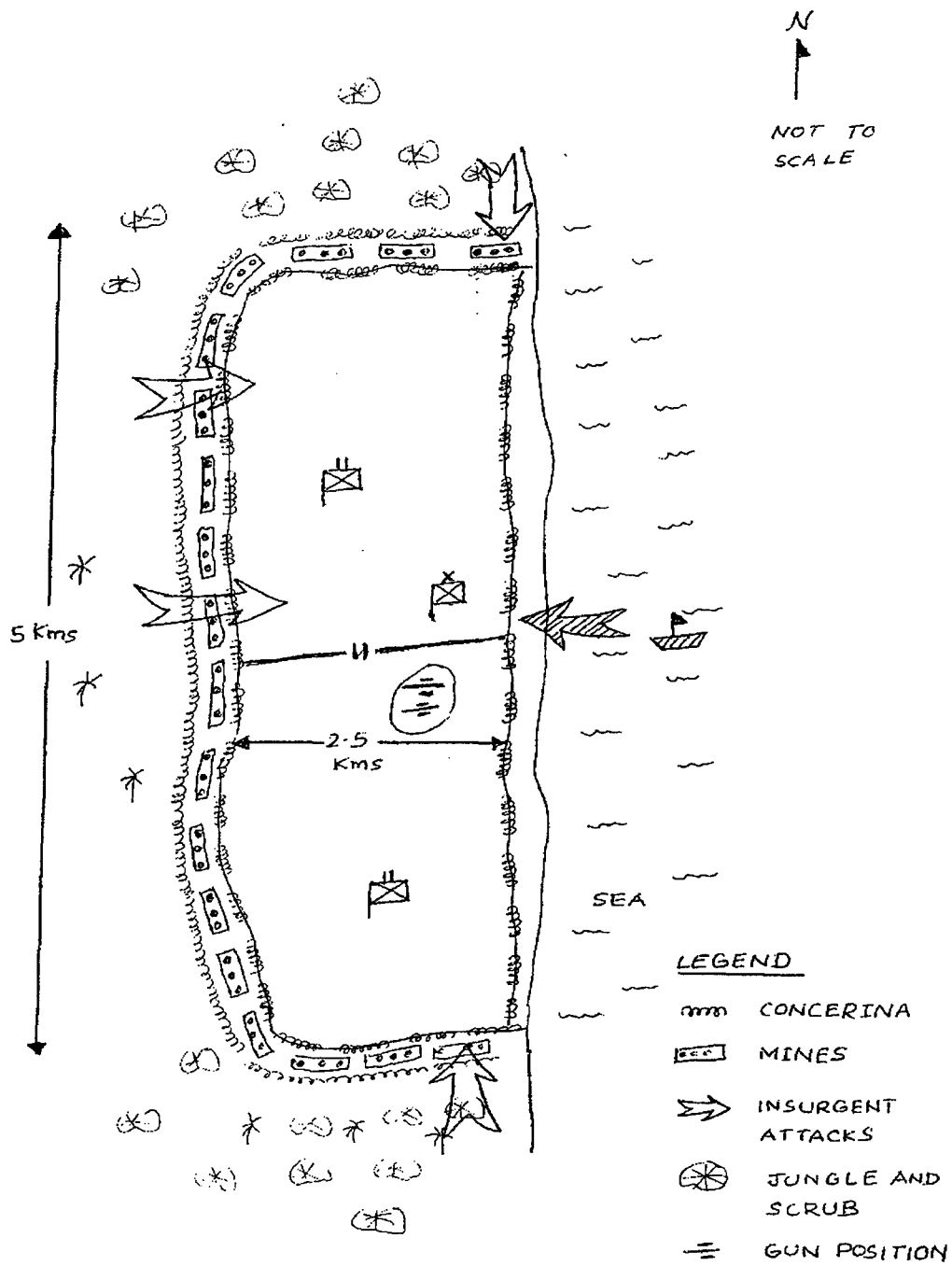


Figure 8. Source: Author's Operational Notes



The weapons research department developed LTTE's most advanced indigenously produced weapon-Pasilan 2000, with a range of 1 kilometer, carrying 25 kilograms of gelignite.

Figure 9. Source: Rohan Gunaratna, *International and Regional Security Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Taprobane Book Shop, 1997), 91.

THE ATTACK ON LTTE BASE SOUTH OF VETTALAICKERNI

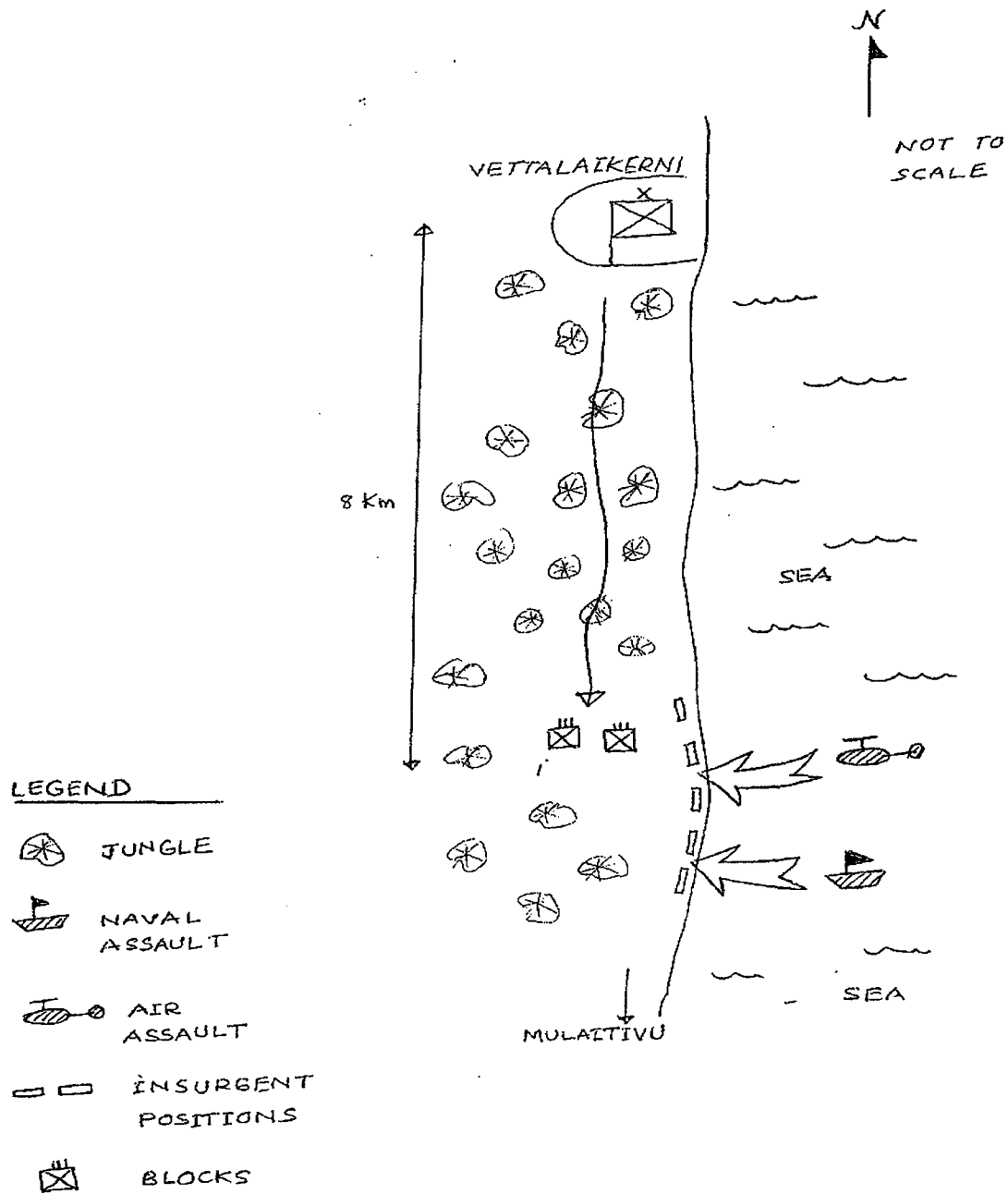


Figure 10. Source: Author's Operational Notes.

ATTACK ON KILLINOCHCHI BASE BY LTTE ON JAN 1997

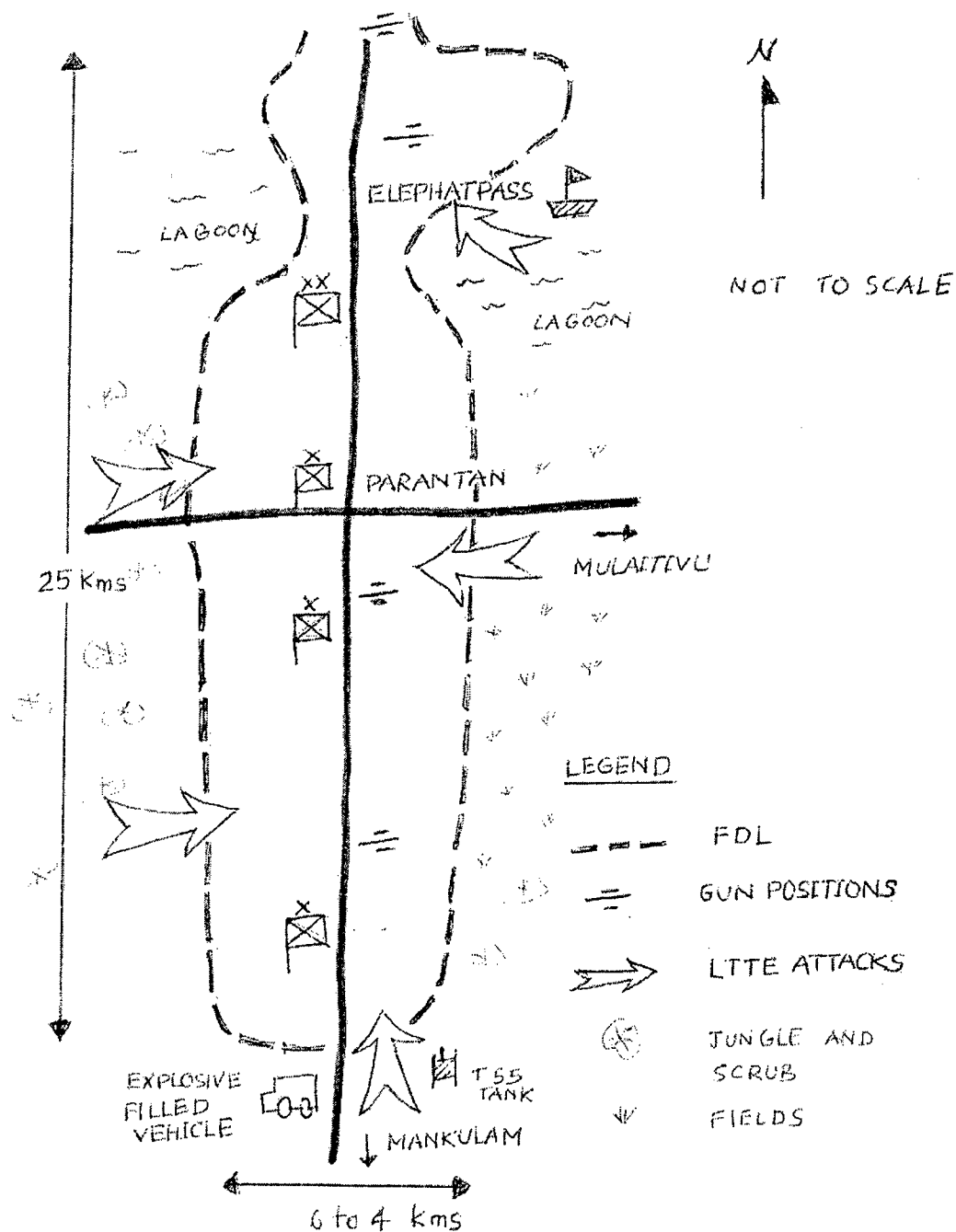


Figure 11. Source: Author's Operations Notebook.

APPENDIX D
TABLES

TABLE 1

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION-1981							
by Ethnicity							
District	Sinhalese	Sri Lanka Tamils	Indian Tamils	Moors	Burghers	Malays	Others
Western province							
1. Colombo	77.9	9.8	1.3	8.3	1.1	1.1	0.5
2. Gampaha	92.2	3.3	0.4	2.8	0.6	0.6	0.1
3. Kalutara	87.3	1.0	4.1	7.5	0.0	0.1	0.0
Southern province							
4. Galle	94.4	0.7	1.4	3.2	0.0	0.1	0.2
5. Matara	94.6	0.6	2.2	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
6. Hambantota	97.4	0.4	0.1	1.1	0.0	1.0	0.0
Uva province							
7. Monaragala	92.9	1.8	3.3	1.9	0.0	0.1	0.0
8. Badulla	68.5	5.7	21.1	4.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Central province							
9. Kandy	75.0	4.9	9.3	10.0	0.2	0.2	0.4
10. Matale	79.9	5.7	6.8	7.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
11. Nuwara Eliya	35.9	13.5	47.3	2.8	0.1	0.2	0.2
Sabaragamuwa province							
12. Kegalle	86.3	2.1	6.4	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
13. Ratnapura	84.6	2.3	11.1	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.1
North-Western province							
14. Kurunegala	93.1	1.1	0.5	5.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
15. Puttalam	82.6	6.7	0.6	9.7	0.1	0.2	0.1
Eastern province							
16. Trincomalee	33.6	33.8	2.6	29.0	0.5	0.3	0.2
17. Batticaloa	3.2	70.9	1.2	23.9	0.7	0.0	0.1
18. Ampara	37.7	20.1	0.4	41.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
North-Central province							
19. Anuradhapura	91.3	1.4	0.1	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
20. Polonnaruwa	90.9	2.2	0.1	6.5	0.0	0.1	0.2
Northern province							
21. Jaffna	0.6	95.3	2.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
22. Mullaitivu	5.1	76.0	13.9	4.9	0.1	0.0	0.0
23. Mannar	8.1	50.6	13.3	26.6	0.0	0.0	1.4
24. Vavuniya	16.6	56.9	19.4	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.2
Total	74.0	12.7	5.5	7.0	0.3	0.3	0.2

Source: K. M. de Silva. *Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1996), 2.

TABLE 2

THE CHRISTIAN COMPONENT OF POPULATION			
1946	9.1%	1963	8.3%
1953	9.0%	1971	7.8% (Roman Catholics 6.9%, Protestants, 0.8%)
1981	7.6% (Roman Catholics, 6.8%, Protestants, 0.76%)		

TABLE 3

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS, 1981						
Ethnic Group	Religion					
	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Roman Catholic	Other Christian	Other
Sinhalese	99.5	0.5	0.6	66.0	43.4	18.8
Sri Lanka Tamil	0.3	64.5	1.1	25.1	37.1	23.5
Indian Tamil	0.1	31.5	0.4	4.7	9.4	9.3
Moor	0.0	3.3	92.8	0.4	0.7	5.7
Burgher	0.0	0.0	0.1	3.3	5.7	3.3
Malay	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.1	0.6	15.9
Other	0.0	0.2	1.4	0.4	3.4	23.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: K. M. de Silva, *Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1996), 16.

TABLE 4

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF ETHNIC GROUPS, 1981							
Ethnic Group							
Religion	Sinhalese	Sri Lanka Tamils	Indian Tamils	Moors	Burghers	Malays	Others
Buddhist	93.3	1.8	1.8	0.2	2.9	2.1	7.5
Hindu	0.1	80.7	90.0	6.7	0.4	3.4	15.3
Muslim	0.1	0.7	0.5	92.6	1.6	89.2	48.7
Roman Catholic	6.1	14.3	6.2	0.4	79.3	2.2	11.6
Christian	0.4	2.4	1.4	0.1	15.3	0.6	12.1
Other	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	2.5	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : *Census of Population and Housing, 1981, General Report, Vol.III*, Dept. of Census and Statistics, Colombo.

Source: K.M. de Silva, *Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: 1996), 17.

TABLE 5

VITAL STATISTICS : SRI LANKA COMPARED WITH SELECTED COUNTRIES IN ASIA

Item	Year	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Rep. of Korea
1. Mid year population in Millions	1992	17.4	111.4	867.8	119.1	186	18.6	63.4	2.8	57.8	43.7
	1993	17.6	113.2	-	122.8	189.3	19.1	65	2.9	58.6	44.1
2. Population Growth Rate %	1992	1.0	1.6	1.9	3.1	1.6	2.2	2.1	0	1.6	0.9
	1993	1.2	1.6	-	3.1	1.7	2.7	2.5	3.6	1.4	0.9
3. Population Growth % Annual Avg. Growth %	1980-1993	18.9	29.1	28.9	48.7	27.8	38.4	35.1	26	25.5	15.7
	1980-1993	1.4	2.2	2.4	3.7	2.1	2.9	2.7	2.0	1.9	1.2
4. Density of Population per Sq.Km.(a)	1992	279	774	264	150	98	56	211	4666	113	441
5. Urban Population (As a % of Total Population)	1993	22	20	26	32	31	43	43	100	34	74(b)
6. Crude Birth Rate per'000	1991	21	34	30	41	25	28	28	18	21	16
7. Crude Death Rate per'000	1991	6	13	10	11	9	5	7	5	6	6
8. Natural Increase of Population per'000	1991	14	21	20	30	16	23	21	13	15	10
9. Fertility Rate (Births per - Woman)	1991	2.5	4.5	3.9	5.7	3	3.7	3.6	1.8	2.3	1.8
10. Infant Mortality Rate (per'000 Live Births)	1992	18	109	89	99	66	14	40	8	26	21
11. Expectation of Life at Birth, Years	1992	71	52	60	58	62	70	65	74	69	70

(a) Population/Total Land Area

Sources: Human Development Report 1994, UNDP

(b) For the year 1990

Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries - 1994, ADB
Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Source: K. M. de Silva, *Ethnic Conflict and Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1996), 48.

TABLE 6

Expenditure on defence 1981-1986

	(Rs million)					
	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Recurrent	786.2	804.21	1182.2	1399.9	2317.9	4,250.4
Capital	264.7	312.8	571.6	1081.6	3293.6	5,453.9
1. Total	1050.9	1117.0	1753.8	2481.5	5611.5	9,704.3
2. Government expenditure	27,772.4	36,165.6	46,203.9	51,226.6	57,437.0	62,361.0
1 as 1% of 2	3.78	3.09	3.80	4.84	9.77	15.56
Rupee to/US \$ ratio*	n.a.	Rs. 20.81=\$1	23.56	25.44	27.16	28.02

TABLE 7

Expenditure on defence 1987-1994

	(Rs million)							
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Recurrent	5,290.8	5,583.2	6,673.1	10,316.5	12,609.3	15,627.3	17,677.0	21,989.0
Capital	6,095.2	5,138.6	2,119.3	4,284.7	3,054.4	2,368.5	3,105.0	3,538.0
1. Total	11,386.0	10,721.8	8,792.4	14,601.2	15,663.7	17,995.8	20,782.0	25,527.0
2. Government expenditure	67,829	85,608	82,469	116,957	139,296	150,079	191,388	197,733
1 as 1% of 2	16.79	12.52	10.06	12.51	11.24	11.99	10.86	12.91
Rupee to/ US \$ ratio*	29.44	31.80	36.05	4-06	41.37	43.83	48.25	49.42

Source: K. M. de Silva, *Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 1996), 46.

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